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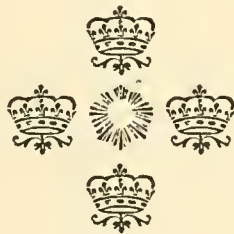
JOHN WENTWORTH

Governor of New Hampshire

1767-1775

BY

LAWRENCE SHAW MAYO



CAMBRIDGE

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TO MY FATHER

PREFACE

IN writing this biography of the last royal governor of New Hampshire, I have tried, whenever possible, to allow Wentworth to tell the story in his own words. This method is open to at least two objections. In the first place the Governor's comments on men and events were not always based upon accurate information. They do, however, show what he believed to be the truth, and hence afford a better explanation of his acts than would be given by an error-free recital of historical facts. Herein, perhaps, lies an essential difference between the writing of biography and the writing of history; but the ideal biography will combine the two points of view and give the reader the situation both as it appeared to the contemporary observer and as it appears in history. I have attempted coördination of this kind, but in many instances I was unable to find material with which to verify or balance Wentworth's contemporaneous account.

The second objection lies in the fact that the Governor's disregard for punctuation and spelling makes his letters difficult to read, and still more difficult to weave into the narrative without destroying whatever smoothness it might otherwise possess. Contrary to modern usage, therefore, I have sometimes punctuated his sentences and corrected his spelling. This seemed justifiable under the circumstances, although I should be the first to discountenance doing so in printing a volume of letters or documents as such. If on any page the reader finds reason to suspect that the meaning has been distorted by these well-intended emendations, I hope that he will examine the original, to which a footnote will guide him, and that he will give me the benefit of his keener perception if he finds that I have been misleading.

The friends and acquaintances who have helped me in my work are so many that I hesitate to acknowledge my indebtedness to any of them individually. On the other hand I should be ungrateful indeed if I failed to take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Gordon Abbott and the Right Honorable Earl Fitzwilliam for their kind interest, which made it possible to reproduce in these pages portraits which are in their possession. Messrs. Moses J. Wentworth and William H. Wentworth placed at my disposal much material that otherwise I should never have discovered. Professor Barrett Wendell's remarkable knowledge of Portsmouth history and tradition is equaled only by the patience with which he has answered my many questions. Likewise, in the general field of American history, Professor Edward Channing has been ever helpful. The arduous task of literary revision has been cheerfully performed by my mother, whose discernment and taste have improved the narrative more than I should like the reader to know.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE RISE OF THE WENTWORTH FAMILY . . .	3
II. HARVARD COLLEGE	7
III. ENGLAND	15
IV. THE PROVINCE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE	31
V. THE KING'S WOODS	47
VI. MRS. THEODORE ATKINSON, JR.	61
VII. ENEMIES AND FRIENDS	73
VIII. WOLFEBOROUGH	87
IX. THE CHURCH AND THE COLLEGE	101
X. DISTANT THUNDER	119
XI. DARKENING SKIES	129
XII. THE STORM	140
XIII. IN EXILE	157
XIV. NOVA SCOTIA	172
XV. BENEDICTION	186
INDEX	199

ILLUSTRATIONS

GOVERNOR WENTWORTH	<i>Frontispiece</i>
From a pastel by Copley, in the possession of Mrs. Gordon Abbott of Boston.	
WENTWORTH HOUSE, YORKSHIRE	<i>Facing page</i> 16
From an engraving in Allen's <i>History of the County of York</i> .	
JOHN WENTWORTH IN 1766	38
From a painting by Wilson, in the gallery of Earl Fitzwilliam at Wentworth Woodhouse, Rotherham.	
MRS. THEODORE ATKINSON, JR.	70
From a painting by Copley, in the gallery of the New York Public Library.	
WOLFEBOROUGH AND ITS ENVIRONS IN 1773	90
From an enlargement of the Holland Map of New Hampshire.	
SIR JOHN WENTWORTH ABOUT 1808	190
From a painting by Robert Field, in Government House, Halifax.	

JOHN WENTWORTH

CHAPTER I.

THE RISE OF THE WENTWORTH FAMILY

A YOUNG man named William Wentworth was one of the first settlers in Exeter, New Hampshire. He came from the village of Rigsby, near Alford, in Lincolnshire, and probably he chose Exeter for his new home because he knew and admired the Reverend John Wheelwright, who had founded the community there. Wentworth and Wheelwright had been neighbors in Old England, where the latter's outspoken Puritanism had incurred the displeasure of his bishop.¹ Deprived of his benefice, Wheelwright had emigrated to Massachusetts, fully expecting to find appreciation in the Bible Commonwealth. But it soon became apparent that his theology was not in complete accord with that of Governor Winthrop, and in the autumn of 1637 he was banished from the Bay Colony. Nothing daunted he went northward and planted a settlement of his own at Exeter.

Just when William Wentworth came to America and joined Wheelwright in New Hampshire we do not know, but it could not have been later than 1639, for in that year he signed a document known as the Exeter Combination. Wheelwright's colony, like that at Plymouth about twenty years earlier, was beyond the limits of any jurisdiction, and in order to organize some sort of government the settlers drew up an agreement and appended their names thereto. The compact is dated July 4, 1639, and fourth in the list of signatures stands the comparatively legible autograph of William Wentworth, who was then about twenty-

1. John Wentworth's *Wentworth Genealogy*, i, 65-70.

three years of age. At that time the future looked fairly bright for Wheelwright and his followers, but within a few years their territory was unexpectedly placed under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts. This meant that Wheelwright must leave the colony which he had founded with so much labor and hardship. Again he sought a new home, and again Wentworth followed him into exile. At Wells, in the province of Maine, they found a more tolerant atmosphere. Wentworth remained there until 1649, the year of Winthrop's death; he then returned to New Hampshire and settled in Dover.

In this environment William Wentworth prospered. He acquired much land, became a ruling elder in the church, was frequently chosen one of the selectmen, and in his old age won lasting renown. In June, 1689, a band of hostile Indians planned a raid upon the five garrisoned houses in which the inhabitants of the outskirts of Dover were accustomed to take refuge at night. The attack was completely successful except in the case of the Heard house. Elder Wentworth was one of this garrison and he awoke just as the savages entered. Without a moment's hesitation he hurled the intruders out into the night; then falling on his back, he set his feet against the door of the stockade and held it until friends came to his support. Two bullets were fired at him through the gate, but fortunately neither was effective. When one considers that at the time of this exploit Elder Wentworth was seventy-three years of age, it is not surprising that the Wentworths of today are proud of their first ancestor in America.

John Wentworth, a grandson of the memorable Elder, was appointed lieutenant-governor of New Hampshire in 1717; and from that year dates the political ascendancy of the Wentworth family, which soon became as controlling an influence in New Hampshire as John Winthrop had been in Massachusetts one hundred years earlier. In 1717 Massachusetts and New Hampshire shared the

same governor. This was supposed to be desirable from a military point of view, but since the chief executive could not reside in both provinces at one time, the northern settlement was given a lieutenant-governor, who in his superior's absence possessed almost full gubernatorial power. For this office John Wentworth of Portsmouth was eminently fitted. In his early days he had led a sea-faring life, and later as a merchant he had amassed a considerable fortune. He was fond of pomp and circumstance, lived on a grand scale, and for reasons more easily conjectured than proved, abandoned the religious denomination of his non-conforming forebears and became a thorough-going Churchman.¹ He proved his ability as an executive by his conduct of the fourth Indian war, commonly called Lovewell's War, and for the most part pleased both the King and his fellow-citizens during the thirteen years of his administration.

Lieutenant-Governor Wentworth died in office in 1730. Of the fourteen children who survived him, his son Benning was his political heir. In 1741 he was appointed governor of New Hampshire, and he remained in that office twenty-five years, holding his commission longer than any other executive in the colonies. By this time the province was happily rid of its political connection with Massachusetts, and upon the foundation of family government which his father had laid, Benning erected an amazing edifice of personally related office-holders. Scarcely a brother, nephew, or cousin was without some position in the administration. One would think that this Wentworth bureaucracy would have shocked the sensibilities of colonial political theorists, yet it seems to have been accepted as a matter of course, and to have caused not one tithe of the comment provoked by the Governor's marriage with Martha Hilton. Longfellow has immortalized this

1. *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, xviii, 51; also Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Fourth Series, ii, 162.

wedding in his *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, and although the facts of the case were not quite so romantic as the poet would lead one to believe, it gave Portsmouth a good deal to talk about, — for Benning Wentworth was precisely forty years older than his bride.

Blessed with money, position, and a splendid mansion, the Governor was in one respect most unfortunate; all his children died comparatively young. So it came about that the logical successor to his office and the heir apparent to his wealth was his nephew, John Wentworth, of whom this story treats.

CHAPTER II.

HARVARD COLLEGE

JOHN WENTWORTH was born in Portsmouth, August 9, 1737,¹ and was properly baptized there five days later. To say that he was born with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth would be a mild way of indicating the material prosperity that surrounded his entrance into this world. His father, Mark Hunking Wentworth, had made a fortune by trading with the West Indies and by supplying the royal navy with masts and spars from the forests of North America.² Besides being one of the richest merchants in New England he was one of a group of land magnates, generally referred to as "the Masonian Proprietors," whose control of New Hampshire lands had come about in the following manner. In 1746 John Tufton Mason, who had a somewhat dubious claim to a generous portion of what is now the Granite State, tried to sell his rights thereto to the province. The Assembly backed and filled until the owner's patience was exhausted, and he looked about for a more resolute purchaser. The latter soon presented itself in an association of twelve prominent Portsmouth gentlemen who were quick to realize the possibilities of the transaction. Before the Assembly awoke to the situation, Theodore Atkinson, Mark Wentworth, Richard Wibird, and their enterprising friends bought Mason's entire interest in fifteen shares for £1500, the first two financiers being the largest stockholders.³

1. *Harvard College Faculty Records* (Ms.), ii, 1. This date is according to the Old Style; by modern reckoning it would be August 20.

2. *New Hampshire State Papers*, xviii, 566.

3. Belknap's *History of New Hampshire*, ii, 258-260.

John Wentworth's mother was likewise a member of the provincial plutocracy. She was Elizabeth Rindge, whose father had been a very successful merchant and an influential citizen. It was natural then that the Mark Wentworths should reside in Portsmouth in a large, gambrel-roofed house, surmounted by a graceful cupola, which stood complacently in its setting of magnificent elms on the corner of Daniel and Chapel Streets.¹ Here the future governor was born, and here he spent his childhood until the time came for him to exchange the congenial atmosphere of the New Hampshire metropolis for the more or less serious pursuit of learning at Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Almost from the beginning of the colonies a certain *entente cordiale* had existed between Portsmouth and Harvard College. In the middle of the seventeenth century, when the Puritan institution was struggling through a period of financial stringency, the old town by the sea heard "the loud groans of the sinking College" and came to its rescue with an annuity of £60 for seven years.² Still further evidence of the good feeling between the two communities is found in the number of Portsmouth lads who sought knowledge on the banks of the Charles. Among these was Benning Wentworth, who was graduated in the Class of 1715, and it followed almost as a matter of course that his nephew John should seek the same *alma mater*. Consequently, in the autumn of 1751, when the boy was barely fourteen years old, he entered Harvard College and was listed as one of Mr. Mayhew's pupils.

Those were the pre-democratic days when the students were arranged not alphabetically but according to the social status of their families. Whether one was towards the head or towards the foot of the list was a matter of serious concern, for members of the leading families had the privilege of helping themselves first

1. Brewster's *Rambles about Portsmouth*, i, 93-95.

2. Quincy's *History of Harvard University*, i, 30.

at table,¹ and, therefore, it was well for John Wentworth that at the "placing" of the freshmen by the president and tutors his name was fifth on the list.² By just what nice distinction it was determined that he should not be first, second, third, or fourth, one cannot say, but it is possible that Massachusetts aristocracy had precedence over that of the neighboring provinces.

But far more important than this superficial social registration was the opportunity for valuable friendships which Harvard offered to young Wentworth; and his choice of comrades seems to have been most happy. First among his companions was Ammi Ruhammah Cutter, a youth from the District of Maine who was a senior when John was a freshman. He was a great favorite with all, but especially so with the boys from Portsmouth, and it was owing to this intimacy that Cutter chose that town for his home after graduation in 1752. There he studied medicine, practised with success, and before long married one of the heiresses of the place.³ So it came about that from their college days until the outbreak of the Revolution John Wentworth and Dr. Cutter were constantly associated. Another noteworthy friend was John Adams, a brilliant young Puritan from Braintree, Massachusetts, a farmer's son who was destined to be the second president of the United States. Although Adams was two years older than Wentworth they were classmates, and the fact that their places on the social list were far apart seems to have had no effect upon their comradeship. Other members of the Class of 1755 were William Browne, subsequently governor of Bermuda; David

1. W. R. Thayer's *Historical Sketch of Harvard University*, p. 42.

2. *Harvard College Faculty Records* (Ms.), ii, 1. There is an excellent article on collegiate social distinctions before the Revolution by Franklin Bowditch Dexter; it is to be found in American Antiquarian Society's *Proceedings*, New Series, ix, 34-59.

3. Benjamin Cutter's *Cutter Family of New England*, pp. 60-72.

Sewall, who became a distinguished federal judge; Tristram Dalton, one of the first senators of the United States from Massachusetts; Samuel Locke, sometime president of Harvard College; and Moses Hemenway, a prominent divine. All in all, that class of twenty-four members was remarkable for the number of men afterwards eminent in various fields, and association with that rare group was one of the most fortunate events in the life of John Wentworth.

College life in the eighteenth century was intended to be a colorless existence in which animal spirits played no part. With this end in view the undergraduate was surrounded by a multitude of petty regulations of his conduct, in which the don'ts far outnumbered the dos. By this method the president and tutors persistently hoped to keep the students in a constant atmosphere of sobriety and study, but the desired result was not achieved. Alas for him who thinks that by suppression he can destroy the natural effervescence of youth! The result is invariably that which attends tying down the safety valve of a steam-engine, but in the eighteenth century pedagogues had yet to learn this by bitter experience. In those days when there was no football or baseball practice on Soldiers Field, no tennis, no crews on the river, and no cinder-track for the fleet of foot, the surplus energy of the undergraduate, which now expends itself in those healthful channels, found occasional outlet in *quasi* riots in the Yard. Presumably the educational theory was that by suppression and concentration this animal force would suffer a remarkable change into greater proficiency in Hebrew, Greek, and Euclid. Actually, however, it took the form of violent outbreaks, which every now and then punctuated the dull monotony of the student's life.

One evening, early in John Wentworth's freshman year, his tutor, Mr. Mayhew, was greatly disturbed "by the rowling of a logg twice down the stairs leading to his chamber from above, after

he was got into bed about eleven o'clock." ¹ With those mingled feelings of resentment and reluctance which only the proctorial mind can appreciate, the conscientious tutor rose from his couch and went to the door of his study. All was quiet, but Mr. Mayhew, being of an inquiring turn of mind, was not content with the cessation of hostilities. He ventured out into the draughty hallway, and standing incautiously at the head of a steep flight of stairs, awaited developments. He had not long to wait. Suddenly from a dark corner a sturdy figure — or were there two? — emerged, and shoved the worthy tutor headlong down the stairway.

This assault was typical of the periodical disturbances that upset the reign of law and order in Harvard College, and one might almost expect to find that John Wentworth was implicated in some of them. On the contrary, however, his behavior appears to have been exemplary, his only offenses being trips "out of town without leave," for which he was fined two shillings sixpence, and prolonged vacations which cost him much less than would similar misdemeanors today. His friend Cutter showed more spirit, though less discretion. When a sophomore he once gave vent to his feelings by smashing the windows of Mr. Flynt, a venerable tutor of over seventy years. Just what his grievance was does not appear. Probably he had none; certainly none that appealed to the Faculty, for they found him guilty of "an heinous insult," and "for his said crime" degraded him fifteen places in his class.²

Such sidelights on the exuberant nature of Cutter make one appreciate John Wentworth's lament after his comrade's graduation. "The College now is filled up (allmost) of Boys from 11 to 14 Years old, and them seem to be quite void of ye Spirit and life which is a general concomitant of Youth; so you may Judge

1. *Harvard College Faculty Records* (Ms.), i, 348.

2. *Ibid.*, i, 301.

what kind of life I now live, who was wont to live in the gayest and most Jovial manner, when I was first admitted one of this Society, which I then thought was a Compound of Mirth and Gaiety, as it is now Gravity. Should you go into a Company of Schollars now, you'd hear disputes of Original Sin, actual Transgression, and such like, instead of the sprightly turns of Wit and Gay repartees which the former Companys used to have, which makes me cry out (and with reason) with a certain author 'Oh Alma mater, how hast thou degenerated from thy Pristine Glory!'"¹ On the whole Wentworth seems to have tolerated rather than enjoyed the life at Cambridge, which he referred to upon at least one occasion as "my pilgrimage among the heathen." The sumptuous fare at his father's table was far more attractive than the two sizes of bread, pound of meat, and half pint of beer that constituted his rations at college,² and for other reasons he was ever ready to take the northerly road that led towards home.

The four years passed quickly, however, and in the summer of 1755, about the time of Braddock's memorable disaster, Wentworth, Adams, and the rest were admitted to the fellowship of educated men. Then came the question of a vocation. Like most sons of the rich, Wentworth entered his father's house of business and devoted his energies to the pursuit of more wealth.³ At this time he had only a small amount of money of his own, £600 or so, which was not enough to buy an interest in a trading ship,⁴ and consequently the future governor was on the lookout for an attractive small investment. This appeared in the autumn of 1759,

1. Cutter's *Cutter Family*, p. 311.

2. Thayer's *Historical Sketch of Harvard University*, p. 41.

3. Plummer's *Manuscript Biographies*, v, 250, in the cabinet of the New Hampshire Historical Society.

4. "Masonian Papers," vol. iii ("Peirce Manuscripts"), folio 11; in the state archives at Concord, New Hampshire.

when Dr. Cutter, David Sewall, and two other young men of Portsmouth purchased a tract of land containing thirty-six square miles on the northwestern frontier of the province. Having secured their grant, they admitted twenty of their friends as associates, among which number were John Wentworth and his younger brother Thomas.¹ The acquired territory was bounded on the west by Lake Winnepesaukee, and included within its limits smaller bodies of water and hills and valleys of rare beauty. Some twenty years earlier part of the same area had been granted to the promoters of an abortive township named Kingswood, but that scheme had proved a failure and its charter had been long since annulled.² The proprietors of the new venture, therefore, discarded the old name and called their township Wolfborough, "in honor of the late renowned and illustrious General Wolf," whose dramatic death on the Plains of Abraham was still fresh in their memories.³

John Wentworth and Dr. Cutter seem to have taken a more active interest in the development of this property than did the rest of the associates. Naturally things moved slowly and cautiously until the end of the French and Indian War was in sight, but in 1762 these two men found themselves on a committee to settle five families in the township, which they were to accomplish even if it were necessary to give each group a thousand acres and £250 in cash. The committee did its best in this discouraging work of town-making, but before any definite results

1. B. F. Parker's *History of Wolfeborough*, pp. 10-15.

2. Belknap's *New Hampshire*, ii, 125, 166, 169.

3. In this christening, appreciation of the soldier's achievement was more apparent than accurate spelling of his name, for the conqueror of Quebec spelled it with a final e. The error was preserved in the charter of the town, and for a century the community accepted the mistake without protest. In recent years, however, it has happily adopted the correct orthography for Wolfeborough.

were achieved other business temporarily engaged the attention of its most energetic member.

When the Treaty of Paris restored peace to the world in 1763, Mark Wentworth, being an enterprising merchant, knew that the time had come to send a representative of his house to London. Consequently, in the autumn of that year, John, "a worthy, agreeable young fellow,"¹ was equipped with the best letters of introduction that the provincial aristocracy could supply and was sent across the sea to England.

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, xviii, 557.

CHAPTER III.

ENGLAND

TO an American of the eighteenth century a visit to England corresponded to the Grand Tour of the Continent which at that time was the usual capstone of a young Englishman's education. Therefore, when John Wentworth crossed the Atlantic at the age of twenty-six he was destined to expand his horizon and to see the world for the first time. But there was this difference between his case and that of the average well-born Briton of his day: the latter, on his travels, sought chiefly adventure, whereas Wentworth took pains to mingle with the most aristocratic and influential men in the realm and to cultivate their acquaintance and esteem. Both of these achievements came to him easily. His letters of introduction and his connection with the dominant family of his native province gave him the entrée; the rest was accomplished by his charming personality. Wherever he visited he conquered. Whoever met him became his friend. His frank, amiable, and often handsome face was decidedly engaging, and Englishmen found his ideas and manners refreshing. Naturally enough, therefore, in England and in Ireland he made advantageous acquaintances, both for his father's business and for his own social enjoyment, the most remarkable and useful being his intimacy with the Marquis of Rockingham.

Today we know that the Marquis was a distant relative of the young American, but apparently, neither of the two men ever had exact knowledge of their relationship.¹ Charles Watson-Went-

1. *Wentworth Genealogy*, i, 25, note; also Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Sixth Series, iv, 602.

worth, as the peer was christened, was then a young man of thirty-four or five, and was soon to become a leader of the Whig opposition to George III. When only twenty years old he had succeeded to his father's title and to the family estates, but until March, 1765, he had little to do with politics. His magnificent country-seat, Wentworth House, was, and still is, the grandest establishment of its kind in all Yorkshire. Situated in the midst of a superb park of fifteen hundred acres, the great mansion expresses better than almost any other edifice in England the splendor and dignity of the eighteenth century. One can easily imagine how it must have dazzled John Wentworth when he beheld it for the first time. The principal façade extended for more than six hundred feet from tower to tower, and consisted of a magnificent central block supported by two symmetrical wings. The whole structure was in an ornate, neo-classic style, replete with Corinthian columns and florid pediments, and bristling with urns and statuary. The windows seemed to be countless, the balustrades of infinite length. All in all, it was a gorgeous spectacle. No less impressive was the interior with its main hall, sixty feet square and forty feet high, fringed with a colonnade of Ionic columns and gleaming with marble statues. Toward the left, one passed into spacious dining-rooms; toward the right, into stately drawing-rooms. Then, as now, the mansion contained a number of old masters, — Guidos, Titians, Caraccis, Giordanos, and others, of which probably the most interesting is Van Dyck's celebrated portrait of that earlier Wentworth, the Earl of Strafford, dictating to his secretary.

None of this glory was wasted upon the young American. Although heir apparent to the largest fortune in New England, it is doubtful if his imagination had ever pictured such a lavish congeries of wealth, art and fashion as that which he encountered when visiting the Marquis of Rockingham; and memories of this



great estate must have been still vivid in his mind a few years later when he built a Wentworth House of his own in the New World. There is a story that the future governor of New Hampshire first attracted his Lordship's attention by betting on his horses at the races, and that the acquaintance began then and there,¹ but such an account of their meeting is more suggestive of provincial imagination than of the formalities of Wentworth House. Be that as it may, the two men became close friends at this time and remained so throughout the Marquis's life.

When Wentworth left America political relations between that part of the empire and the British Parliament were of the best. General rejoicing at the cessation of war, freedom from danger of French encroachments in the North, and the expulsion of Spain from the Floridas in the South, gave every token of an era of peace and prosperity. But, as usual, the expected did not happen. Parliament destroyed all hope of a united empire by subjecting the continental colonies to new and unwelcome taxes, which, whether just or otherwise, were wholly inexpedient. The Americans tolerated part of the program but protested against its most irksome feature, the notorious Stamp Act. To insure union against the common enemy, a congress of the colonies was held at New York in October, 1765. This body formulated the colonial objections and adopted resolutions for the preservation of the rights of Englishmen in America. New Hampshire, for some reason or other, begged to be excused from the congress, but when its measures were published the northern province merely duplicated them and sent the papers to England. At the same time popular disapproval of the new régime took the form of non-importation agreements and riots. The former method was wise and effective, especially when the merchants went so far as to cancel orders al-

1. *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, xviii, 52.

ready given and to send no remittances to England in payment of their debts. This upset business conditions in the mother country and made the exporters and manufacturers there demand fair play for their colonial customers. Not at all so commendable were the outbursts of violence which throughout the continental colonies descended upon him who had stamps to distribute, and, in some cases, upon him who had not. The most unfortunate of these episodes occurred at Boston where the mansion of Governor Hutchinson was attacked and wrecked by a mob.

For many years New Hampshire's "faithful and vigilant" agent at London had been John Thomlinson. He was now old and infirm, and in the critical juncture of state affairs the provincial assembly deemed it wise to appoint a more active man as joint agent and prospective successor. For this office they selected Barlow Trecothick, a London merchant in the American trade, who was also an alderman of the metropolis and a member of Parliament.¹ Besides Trecothick some strictly American leaven was added to the agency by the appointment of John Wentworth, then in London.² The combination of the British merchant and the New Hampshire visitor was most happy, for both men were close friends of Lord Rockingham, and it was not unlikely that when the Marquis should succeed George Grenville as prime minister, Wentworth and Trecothick could bring about the repeal of the odious Stamp Act.

In the summer of 1765 the Grenville ministry was dismissed and Rockingham and his Whig friends took its place. What was to be their policy in regard to America? Men rather than measures were the Premier's first consideration, and there was no well-defined solution of the colonial problem in the minds of the members of his cabinet. Even as late as December, 1765, they

1. Keppel's *Memoirs of the Marquis of Rockingham*, i, 320.

2. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 92.

had failed to determine upon a program, but before then Rockingham had told Wentworth that he would "give his interest to repeal one hundred Stamp Acts before he would run the risk of such confusions as would be caused by enforcing it and that he knew there were already ten thousand workmen discharged from business in consequence of the advices from America."¹ Just how directly John Wentworth influenced the Marquis's opinion cannot be estimated, but Edmund Burke, who was then Rockingham's private secretary, has made it evident that Trecothick and Rockingham were hand in glove at this time and that the former was joint composer of an official general letter which was "the principal instrument in the happy repeal of the Stamp Act."² This being the case, one cannot but wonder to what extent the Alderman's views were shaped by the other agent for New Hampshire. Certain it is that Wentworth worked with a will at this time, and under many difficulties, as the following extract from one of his letters testifies.

It is impossible to judge what measures will be taken here in respect to this *cursed* act. This is certain, — the ministry are favorably disposed, and I believe are averse to military execution in any British dominion. Much will depend on the result of the congress at New York. I wish it may be firm, decent, loyal, and expressive; if possible evading all matter of right, a point too critically dangerous to discuss, and laying great stress upon the inability of America, the grievous mode, and the cruel, destructive deprivation of the admiralty courts. . . . There will be great opposition to the repeal of this odious act. Many members of Parliament, who were closely attached to Mr. Grenville and voted for it, will adhere to the rectitude of the measure. I have conversed with some of them upon the subject and find them very warm against us, alleging the necessity of enforcing it, as the colonists have so violently refused submission to it, and not only avowed independence but also broke loose from all law and government, outrageously

1. John Adams's *Works*, ii, 175.

2. Keppel's *Memoirs of Rockingham*, i, 319.

insulting the chief magistrate, destroying his property and endangering his person.

These and a hundred such arguments I daily combat, opposing reason and unalienable right to some; to others I offer the example of England, nay of her *patriotic* (as they say) metropolis, which frequently breaks out to excess upon any grievance, though represented in the legislation and so near the throne with every advantage to obtain redress. However, I can't help regretting such illegal conduct, particularly as it may prevent many good things being done for us, that were intended, and will render even just relief more difficult to be obtained, — not to say anything of the fatal consequences (which more affect every man who has life or property to be protected) that attend an entire subversion of government.

You will not think I approve the act, or that the Americans are totally wrong in their discontent. No, sir; I join with them. I have hitherto and to this minute do say everything against it, and openly commend all prudent measures to reverse it.¹

Friends of liberty on both sides of the water looked forward eagerly to the opening of Parliament. This occurred in January, 1766, and after much debate, in which Pitt, Burke, and Dr. Franklin increased their reputations, the repeal of the Stamp Act was achieved.

Whether or not John Wentworth deserves any credit for changing the course of imperial legislation, his presence in London at just this time was in another way most advantageous to himself, to his Uncle Benning, and ultimately to the people of his province. In spite of many good qualities, Benning Wentworth had proved himself far from ideal as governor of New Hampshire, and plenty of his constituents were eager to oust him from his chair. Jealousy was doubtless the chief source of their hostility, but the executive laid himself open to legitimate complaint in a

1. *John Wentworth to Daniel Rindge*, November 29, 1765; in the "Masonian Papers," vol. iii ("Peirce Manuscripts"), folio 36. These are preserved in the state archives at Concord, New Hampshire.

number of ways. His method of granting townships was perhaps the most objectionable of his practices, and also the most remunerative to himself. During his administration he distributed two hundred tracts of land of generous proportions to various groups of persons, and in each case reserved for himself a personally selected lot of five hundred acres.¹ This meant that in less than twenty years Benning Wentworth acquired about one hundred thousand acres of New Hampshire territory which cost him not a penny and were scattered over the province in such a manner that he could not fail to become rich regardless of the direction in which growth and development might turn. This was bad enough from an ethical point of view, but it does not tell the whole story of Benning's iniquity, for every land grant meant a fee to the governor, and the more prosperous the applicant the fatter the perquisite. Under the circumstances, Wentworth easily persuaded himself that the good of the province was promoted by granting townships to obviously successful men whether they came from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, or Connecticut, — but disappointed aspirants within his own province were not so readily convinced. To them it looked as if the new townships went to the highest bidder, as no doubt they did, and the fact that the Governor who had been a bankrupt merchant in 1740² was a capitalist in 1760 did not alter their conviction.

These malcontents, combining with other enemies of the administration, would have inevitably made themselves heard in England before a great while, but Nemesis gave their cause tremendous impetus when she decreed that the very avidity of which they complained should bring trouble to the Governor from a different angle. As early as 1749 Benning Wentworth began to grant land beyond the Connecticut River, territory over

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, xxiv, xxv, and xxvi.

2. Belknap's *New Hampshire*, ii, 182.

which he had no jurisdiction. The historic Vermont town which bears his Christian name was one of the first of these unwarranted creations, and soon evoked from the governor of New York a polite statement that this domain was at *his* disposal and not at that of the governor of New Hampshire. Wentworth replied that the original grant to the Duke of York might seem to give that impression, but since Massachusetts and Connecticut had been allowed to extend their limits several miles westward from the river he supposed New Hampshire might expect the same privilege. Although Governor Clinton declined to accept his colleague's pretensions at their face value, he was most accommodating and agreed to leave the matter to the determination of the King. Wentworth concurred, and sheaves of arguments and counter-arguments were sent across the ocean to influence the King in Council.¹ One would think that until the controversy was settled discretion and courtesy would have prevented Wentworth's granting any more of the disputed territory, but these considerations worried him not at all. He continued to parcel it out right and left as if a decision in favor of his province were a certainty.²

In England the case dragged along for a few years and was then lost from view in the more urgent business of the Seven Years' War. The conquest of Canada in 1760 was followed by a scramble for land in Vermont and New Hampshire, which was a most attractive proposition now that the country to the northward was no longer controlled by dangerous enemies. The movement reached its height in 1761 when Benning Wentworth's coffers chinked to the tune of well-nigh eighty new townships, sixty-eight of which were situated in the contested area. This was too

1. O'Callaghan's *Documentary History of New York*, iv, 531-575.

2. W. H. Fry's *New Hampshire as a Royal Province*, p. 268.

much for the governor of New York, who reported these "most surprising and extravagant encroachments" in such virulent terms that the dormant Board of Trade actually awoke to the situation. The matter was brought to the King's attention and in the summer of 1764 an Order in Council set a limit to New Hampshire at the west bank of the Connecticut River.

The dismissal or resignation of Benning Wentworth ought to have followed in short order, but the great question of colonial taxation obscured all lesser turmoils at this time, and the iniquities of the gouty Governor were temporarily passed over. About the time of the Stamp Act, however, the old complaints, reënforced by fresh grievances, determined his downfall.¹ Seeing the ax about to fall, John Wentworth hurried to the rescue and made doubly good use of his friendship with the Marquis of Rockingham who was still at the head of the ministry. "I wrote a hasty explanation and defence of the good old gentleman for the information of my noble friend and patron, through whom I prevailed to obtain time for him to resign, which saved all the disgrace which might have attended his removal, especially as it appeared in favor of his nephew."² So wrote John Wentworth in after years, and there is no reason for doubting his statement of the case. It came about, therefore, that Benning Wentworth, in-

1. *Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series*, iv, 673-680; also Belknap's *New Hampshire*, ii, 337.

2. Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Sixth Series, iv, 498. John Wentworth gave Dr. Jeremy Belknap, the historian of New Hampshire, a copy of the "hasty defence and explanation," but stipulated, "This memoir, being confidential, must not be published, though you can gather from it what may be necessary." The trust was not betrayed, but since Belknap's death the paper has been brought to light and printed in full. See *New Hampshire State Papers*, xviii, 560-567. From this and other sources it appears that some of the government's displeasure at least was due to Benning Wentworth's careless administration as surveyor general of his Majesty's woods.

stead of receiving the censure and dismissal which he had earned, was allowed to resign, and his nephew, who was not quite thirty years of age, fell heir to his office. The new governor's commission was issued early in August, 1766, and was accompanied by other letters patent which gave him admiralty jurisdiction over waters adjacent to the scanty seaboard of New Hampshire,¹ and added to his trust the more arduous duties of surveyor general of his Majesty's woods in America. The former was a logical extension of the executive's bailiwick, the latter a separate function which had been and still might be a sinecure, but in the hands of John Wentworth it was to be a serious duty intelligently and vigorously executed.

It was now time for Wentworth to return to his native province, but before he departed additional honors of an entirely different character were conferred upon him. On the twelfth day of August, 1766, he was given the degree of Doctor of Common Law by Oxford University,² the latest of a series of academic recognitions which were marshaled after his name. Besides his bachelor's degree at Harvard, Wentworth had taken its customary aftermath, an A.M. three years later; in 1763 Nassau (Princeton) gave him his first honorary degree of master of arts, which was followed a year later by an LL.D. from the great Scottish institution at Aberdeen. To this cluster of titles Oxford now added another, in recognition more of the man's personality and elevation than of any great mental achievement which his record could show. Nevertheless, that fact did not prevent his being described as *excellentissimus et honorabilis vir, Joannes Wentworth, armiger Novae Hantoniae apud Americanos, provinciae gubernator et capitaneus generalis*, — all of which was un-

1. *Copies of Commissions*, 1747-1828 (Ms.), in the state archives at Concord, New Hampshire.

2. *Alumni Oxonienses*, 1715-1886.

deniable, but perhaps hardly sufficient ground for an honorary degree from a great university according to our present standards.

Well laden with honors and offices, Wentworth now turned his eyes westward and prepared for his return to America. In anticipation of this event he had bought a number of fine English horses and had engaged a retinue of servants. Much as he may have wished to sail directly to New Hampshire, duty required his presence in the southern provinces for his commission as surveyor general of his Majesty's woods stipulated that he should not only preserve the white pines of the North, but also encourage the production of tar and hemp in the South. Consequently, he decided to go home by the way of Charleston, South Carolina. This detour would enable him to observe the condition of these industries in the Carolinas and Virginia and to make a general survey of the timber in those remote parts. His many friends supplied him with wine and other delicacies which might relieve the hardships of the long voyage — for the Governor was a poor sailor — and when all was ready the ship started on its zigzag way to America. Like most vessels in that day it chose the extreme southern route, calling first at Lisbon, and thence making its "long and hazardous passage" across the Atlantic by the way of the Canary Islands. From beginning to end it was a stormy and tedious trip. For two days the ship lay off Lisbon, but the winds were so violent as to prevent a landing. Thence she plowed her way to Teneriffe and at length in sixty days more to the welcome port of Charleston. Probably few mortals have been more cheered by the sight of the American shore than was John Wentworth on the twenty-second day of March, 1767. For four days thereafter he rested and rejoiced in that undulating *terra firma* which only landlubbers can fully appreciate. Then with eager interest he started inland to study the timber in various parts of the province.

No previous surveyor general of the King's woods had made a thorough and intelligent investigation of the forests or a careful appraisal of their assets. Wentworth's report is interesting and gives one a vision of the glory of the pine barrens of North Carolina when they were a magnificent forest primeval. He found no white pines,—but yellow pines, tall and straight, "carrying their proportionate size to a sufficient length for 25-inch masts." There were also pitch pines, live oaks, and white oaks in immense quantities adjacent to all the Carolina rivers. The wood of the long-leaved pine he declared to be sound, "but not clear of hard knots," whereas the pitch pines could be made into as good masts as those imported from Riga. Indeed, Wentworth thought that in weight, solidity, and elasticity they excelled those from Russia. Southern white oak, however, he deemed inferior to that in the North, "being porous and full of juices that soon destroy the wood." All these observations are refreshing, because they show that at last the care of England's naval resources had been entrusted to an intelligent and interested guardian. One cannot but wish that those great tracts of Georgia pine might have been conserved, for bleeding and burning have wiped them off the sandy uplands of the South, and naught remains but a vestige of their splendor. Picturesqueness has taken the place of grandeur, to be sure, but the great charred stumps that are scattered through the wilderness make one long for a view of the country as John Wentworth saw it.

The Governor believed in combining business with pleasure, and did so with marked success throughout his life. Therefore, it is not surprising that his northward journey was pleasantly interrupted by visits at the homes of the colonial aristocracy. The bluest of Virginia blood flowed in the veins of the Byrd family, and none prided himself more upon his quality than the monarch of Westover. This was William Byrd, the third of that name in

America. His grandfather was a remarkable man who possessed a genius for making money; his father was a gentleman and a scholar under whose management the great plantation on the James came to be known far and wide for its elegance, its hospitality, and its good company. William Byrd III was destined to personify the decay of family and property which often comes with the third generation, but in 1767 he could hold his own with the first of the first families.¹ Westover, according to the Marquis de Chastellux, surpassed all the other seats along the river "in the magnificence of the buildings, the beauty of its situation, and the pleasures of society."² The last of its distinctive qualities was due largely to the charming personality of Mrs. Byrd, a daughter of Charles Willing of Philadelphia, but William Byrd himself was a delightful host and a man after Wentworth's own heart. He liked horses much, and cards too much, both of which tastes were shared by this guest who seems to have thoroughly enjoyed his migratory visit. Another stopping-place in his progress through Virginia was Chatsworth, the home of Colonel Peter Randolph. Like most tide-water Virginians of his day, the Colonel bred blooded horses, and Wentworth, to whom the question of expense seems never to have been troublesome, purchased two pairs of his thoroughbreds to add to those which he had brought with him from England.

Crossing the Potomac, the Governor came to Annapolis, the capital of provincial Maryland, where he lodged with Governor Sharpe. Thence the road led him to Philadelphia, to "Trent-town Falls," and to New York. Near the last town he visited the William Bayards who owned most of the island of Weehawken.³ This was in the month of June and Wentworth was naturally en-

1. J. S. Bassett's *Writings of Colonel William Byrd*.

2. Chastellux's *Travels in North America*, ii, 162-163.

3. *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, xvi, 53.

tranced with "the pleasant views over to Hoebuck" [Hoboken], with "the varied improvements of Mrs. Bayard's paradise," and last, but not least, with the music of Miss Bayard's voice and harpsichord.¹ It is an interesting fact, but not strange, that each and every one of the families who entertained Wentworth chose the Loyalist side in the approaching revolution, and were in most cases banished from their homes and hearthstones almost within a decade. Such, too, was to be the fate of their guest, but in 1767 the colonial aristocracy ate, drank, and were merry, little realizing that they were dancing on the summit of a smouldering volcano.

Three days by water brought the traveler to Boston, where he renewed old acquaintances and then started on the last lap of his circuitous journey from London to Portsmouth. In the meantime great preparations for his welcome were being made at the New Hampshire capital. To receive his Excellency, the Assembly appointed a committee which performed its task at the expense of more than £175.² Accompanied by several members of the Council, and escorted by two troops of horse, this delegation greeted him at the boundary line of the province, three miles north of Newburyport, and conducted him over the familiar highway to Portsmouth. All along the way the procession was augmented by prominent gentlemen who had driven in from the surrounding towns until the cavalcade exceeded anything of its kind since the days of Lord Bellomont. At the head of King

1. *John Wentworth to William Bayard*, July 3, 1767.

All references given in this manner indicate that a copy of the original letter is in the state archives at Concord, New Hampshire. The original letter-books are at Halifax, Nova Scotia, but the State of New Hampshire has transcripts of the three volumes containing Wentworth's correspondence from 1767 to 1778.

2. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 163.

Street, "the regiment of militia and the independent company of engine-men, under arms, opened to right and left, the officers of which pay'd the military compliment to his Excellency as he passed by them."¹ Arriving at the court-house about noon, Wentworth alighted and entered the council-chamber where his official advisers and other magistrates attended him. Only one dignitary was missing, and that one was the deposed governor, Benning Wentworth. His absence, however, was due not to any grievance against his nephew, but to failing health which had confined him to his mansion at Little Harbor for the past three years or more.²

Besides the militia and the rest of the procession a great crowd of civilians had gathered in the open square to see and hear what they could. They had not long to wait before the sheriff arose and read aloud the Governor's commissions as captain-general, chief executive, and vice-admiral of the province of New Hampshire. Then John Wentworth took the oath of office, as did likewise the members of his Council. This was followed by the reading of a proclamation empowering the magistrates to exercise the duties of their offices and charging them to carry their powers into execution. These ceremonies being completed, the cannon at Fort William and Mary boomed, the militia fired three volleys of small arms, and the populace gave three cheers for his Excellency, all of which combined to create the greatest exhilaration that Portsmouth had known in many a long year.

The reception committee did nothing by halves. After the more formal part of the program was over, Wentworth and his Council and all the leading gentlemen of the capital and its vicinity were conducted to a public banquet. Finally, in the late afternoon, "another procession on foot was formed, and waited upon

1. *New Hampshire Gazette*, June 19, 1767.

2. *New Hampshire Historical Society's Collections*, iii, 282-283.

his Excellency to his seat, where they took leave, and left him to receive if possible a more endearing reception from his affectionate family, who had long expected the happy event.”¹ Such was the inauguration of John Wentworth on Saturday, the thirteenth day of June in the year of our Lord seventeen hundred sixty-seven. Who would have dared to predict that it ushered in the stormiest administration in the history of the province of New Hampshire?

1. *New Hampshire Gazette*, June 19, 1767.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROVINCE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

AT the time of John Wentworth's accession, New Hampshire was a rapidly growing province, containing approximately fifty thousand people.¹ Six years later its population had increased by almost forty per cent, and in 1775 more than eighty thousand men, women, and children were living within its boundaries. These figures are probably accurate enough, although the Governor complained that the count for 1767 was at least two thousand short. Strange as it may seem, this error was due not to carelessness but to prudence. The people remembered the fate of Israel when David had attempted to count his subjects, and wishing to avoid a similar visitation of divine wrath declined to return a true census.²

Whatever the exact number of its inhabitants may have been, New Hampshire was a thriving and attractive community, and Wentworth was fortunate in coming into office on the tide of prosperity which followed the Peace of Paris and continued to rise until the beginning of the American Revolution. Nevertheless, the task of governing this expanding colony and of providing for its needs as they arose was not easy because of the intense sectionalism prevailing in the different regions of the province.

Like ancient Gaul, New Hampshire was divided into three distinct parts, — the Northeast, the South, and the West. Each had

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 170; x, 636. Belknap's *New Hampshire*, iii, 234.

2. *John Wentworth to the Board of Trade*, March 25, 1768. The biblical reference is to I Chronicles, xxi.

its own prejudices, manner of thought, and economic interests. The first division comprised the town of Portsmouth and its immediate environs. For generations the inhabitants of this district had been accustomed to contact with crown officers, and thought constantly of their connection with his Majesty's government. They had never had a charter, and therefore had never tasted the joys of comparative independence. Whether rich or poor, most of these people were essentially aristocrats, prided themselves upon their intimacy with the office-holding class, and enjoyed thoroughly the reproduction of English social stratification which existed in their midst.

The second district coincided roughly with the Merrimac Valley, which had been settled for the most part by emigrants from Massachusetts, who brought with them and transmitted to their descendants the republican principles of the Bay Colony. These people believed in a well-regulated state, but not at all in indiscriminate emulation of the social institutions of the mother country. Their trade was largely with Massachusetts people and their metropolis was Boston. All in all, they formed the strongest and least interesting part of the population.

The third division included the western frontier of New Hampshire, which was populated chiefly by men who had migrated up stream from Connecticut. Throughout the colonial period Connecticut did exactly as she pleased because she was blessed with a most liberal charter, and her children continued to do so even when they moved into the jurisdiction of a royal province. They were arch-democrats and very naturally looked with scorn upon the citizens of the maritime parts and upon their royalist proclivities.¹ On the whole, the three parts of New Hampshire had little in common, and tactful indeed must be the executive who could guide legislation so that it would contribute to the good of

1. Belknap's *New Hampshire*, iii, 253-255.

the entire province without giving offense to one or more of these jealous sections.

Agriculture and commerce were the chief pursuits of the men of New Hampshire, but manufacturing, handicapped as it was by lack of capital and by parliamentary hostility, was beginning to get a foothold. The chief artificial product in 1767 was linen, made from flax raised in the province. Selling at 20*d* per yard, it was dearer than the imported article, but stronger and better, and at this time about twenty-five thousand yards were produced each year. Since flax is perhaps the last crop which one would expect to harvest in New Hampshire today, an explanation of this phenomenon will not be out of place, especially since it will bring into view yet another element in the diversified population of New Hampshire. About 1720 a colony of vigorous, freedom-loving Scotch-Irish had settled in the Merrimac Valley. They brought with them their old habits of life and their old industries, among which were the culture of flax and the manufacture of linen. For the latter they imported the familiar foot-turned spinning wheels, hand-cards, and looms, and soon established an enviable reputation for their fabrics. These commanded both a more ready sale and a higher price than those produced elsewhere, and became a matter of such pride in the community that town officials were appointed to seal all genuine goods.¹ The settlement was named Londonderry in honor of the city in the north of Ireland whence most of its inhabitants had come. Being Scotch Presbyterians of the deepest dye, who had left their Hibernian neighbors in the Old World because they wished "to withdraw from the communion of idolators," they naturally resented beyond words the unfortunate manner in which the older settlers referred to them as "Irish people" and treated them accordingly. For a long time our English ancestors in New Hamp-

1. Edward L. Parker's *History of Londonderry, N. H.*, p. 50.

shire failed to distinguish between Scotch-Irish and the Irish-Irish, but happily the thrift, industry, and prosperity of the community at Londonderry ultimately overcame the prejudice which ignorance had instituted against it.¹

The production of flax meant also the manufacture of linseed oil and a surplus of flaxseed which could be exported with profit. Saddles and shoes were made in sufficient quantities to meet domestic needs, and a modicum of iron was wrought for shipbuilding and agricultural implements. On the other hand, the manufacture of woolen goods hardly existed. Farmers kept only enough sheep to supply their households with wool, which was spun and woven at home. Whatever fears members of Parliament entertained concerning the establishment of dangerous rival industries in America were groundless as far as this province was concerned. In fact, the difficulty lay in persuading a colonist to follow any trade, for as soon as a shoemaker, a joiner, or a silversmith saved enough money to buy a little tract of land and build a hut in the wilderness, he laid down his tools and led the virile life of a backwoodsman.² Under normal conditions, therefore, any schemes for manufacturing were sure to be short-lived, regardless of either New Hampshire's needs or England's anxiety.

The capital of the province was Portsmouth, a town containing a practically stationary population of about forty-five hundred souls. Of this number, approximately one hundred seventy-five were negro slaves.³ These black people constituted the household servant class, which maintained the pomp and show of the well-born, and gloried in their menial association with wealth and aristocracy. But slaves, even as domestic retainers, were fast be-

1. Belknap's *New Hampshire*, ii, 41, note.

2. *John Wentworth to the Board of Trade*, March 25, 1768.

3. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 168, 765. For a diverting account of black society in Portsmouth, see Brewster's *Rambles*, pp. 208-211.

coming uneconomic, and as they died off their places were taken by free white labor. Portsmouth's wealth had been acquired in commerce and in office-holding, and it was reflected in stately mansions. Almost without exception, these buildings were of wood, but they were none the less beautiful on that account, for the artisans of that day were architects as well, and their genius found expression in doorways of exquisite design, in chastely ornamented mouldings, and in mantel-pieces of perfect proportions and charming detail. Not all the residences were pretentious, but each had an air of conscious gentility which was in keeping with the spirit of Portsmouth society. The new governor was to the manner born as far as the provincial capital was concerned, but could he understand also the aspirations of the men in the southern and western parts of New Hampshire? His deeds in the next eight years can best answer the question.

John Wentworth's administration, like that of every other colonial governor, contained the usual chronic bicker over salary, the universal attempt to place the local currency upon a satisfactory basis, and other perennial questions which bore the modern reader as much as they annoyed the provincial executive. But above this sea of petty controversy rise four constructive policies, the adoption of which may be rightly attributed to the zeal and foresight of Wentworth. These were the division of the province into counties, the improvement of land transportation, the surveying of New Hampshire, and military preparedness. In the first three of these fields he created enduring monuments; in the last his efforts produced results quite different from those he intended.

Owing to the rapid expansion of the province, the people of New Hampshire could no longer be served conveniently by a sole fountain of justice located at Portsmouth.¹ In fact, a frontiers-

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 130.

man sometimes found that the expense of traveling to and from the shores of the Piscataqua made it cost £10 to collect a debt of £5.¹ This was unprofitable, to say the least. To make matters worse, the judicial offices and their emoluments were monopolized by the aristocracy residing in and about Portsmouth. Naturally this order of things did not please the new settlers in the Winnepesaukee region, nor those along the lower courses of the Merrimac, and least of all the remote radicals in the Connecticut Valley. The first Assembly which met under Governor John Wentworth voted to remedy the evil by dividing the province into four administrative units, — four counties, each with its own courts and appropriate officers. The Council, however, chose to regard this as a very inexpedient departure from precedent and one which would be “attended with very great expence and a very heavy and unnecessary burthen on the people.” This has a fatherly and benevolent sound, but one should remember that the members of the Council were not elected by the people and that, almost without exception, they dwelt within ten miles of the metropolis. Many of them held judicial or semi-judicial offices, and, all in all, they formed a compact conservative body, which much preferred to have all governmental business transacted under its eye. Therefore, they reduced the proposed number of counties to two, and agreed to the arrangement with political grace worthy of the Tudors.

This did not satisfy the lower house, however, and after a number of futile attempts at a compromise the Assembly was dissolved by the Governor. The situation demanded a tactful leader who could devise an arrangement satisfactory to both parties without involving a vital concession by either. For John Wentworth it was a political opportunity, and he made the most of it. Although one would have expected him to choose the side of

1. *John Wentworth to the Board of Trade*, March 25, 1768.

his uncles and his cousins in the Council, to whom he was bound by ties both of kinship and of class, he did not do so. Neither did he comply absolutely with the wishes of the representatives of the people, but by taking an independent course he contrived a scheme that was better than any heretofore suggested and met with the favor of both parties. The province should be divided into *five* counties, three fully organized and two to receive judicial and administrative privileges when their development should warrant such action.¹ This was a masterpiece of diplomacy. The Assembly was overjoyed at the prospect of more counties than they had asked for, while the fears of the conservative Council were assuaged by the limitations placed upon two out of the five units. In March, 1769, the bill became an act and received royal confirmation two years later.²

In the New England colonies it was customary to leave the nomenclature of newly incorporated townships to the whim and taste of the governor. On this analogy, therefore, John Wentworth assumed the responsibility for naming the five counties of his province. His selection of names was both politic and euphonious. The most important division was christened Rockingham in honor of the Whig marquis who had given him his high office. This shire contained the capital and was the heart of the colony. Its neighbor on the west was dubbed Hillsborough and thus perpetuated in New Hampshire cartography the title of Wills Hill, Earl of Hillsborough, who at that time occupied the office of Colonial Secretary and performed its duties with increasing lack of success. The towns still further toward the west were swept into a jurisdiction called Cheshire, while the functionless areas of the north and northwest received the familiar names of Strafford and Grafton. The former was doubtless in honor of

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 175.

2. *Ibid.*, vii, 274.

Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, a great soldier, who learned too late the inadvisability of placing faith in princes, — at least, in princes of the type of Charles I. As Strafford was the great-great-grandfather of the Marquis of Rockingham and a collateral ancestor of his own, this name made a double appeal to the Governor. Grafton had no family significance, but the Duke of Grafton was prime minister of Great Britain in 1768 and 1769, and, although his Grace's 'personal morals were a scandal even in a century not easily scandalized, he was a consistent friend of the colonies. Had he been a man of more force, his place in American history would probably equal that of Lord Rockingham; as it is, he is remembered, if at all, only because of his amours and his horses.

As Governor Wentworth viewed his province, he was impressed with its need of roads. This deficiency was to be expected in an expanding frontier colony, and would be particularly apparent, perhaps, to a governor who had invested in lands in the interior, but New Hampshire's need of adequate means of land transportation was both unique and genuine. Although the province was drained by four large navigable rivers — the Connecticut, the Merrimac, the Saco, and the Androscoggin — none of these streams found its mouth in New Hampshire. The Piscataqua presents the appearance of a mighty river at Portsmouth, but in reality it is a mere arm of the sea into which a number of short streams empty their insignificant waters. Thus, in the days before railroads rendered geographical conditions unimportant as far as commerce is concerned, the produce of inland New Hampshire went, not to Portsmouth, but to Connecticut, Massachusetts, and the District of Maine. This trade may have been just as advantageous to the farmers and lumbermen of New Hampshire, but Wentworth felt that it was injurious to the province as a whole, for the profits from the further shipping and sale of these



goods to the inhabitants of the West Indies came, not to Portsmouth merchants, but to those of Newburyport, Boston, and New Haven. In other words, to use the stately language of the Governor, "the labour of the increasing country" was "unnaturally lucrating to the neighboring colonies."¹ Moreover, he knew that the only hope of increasing the scanty supply of metallic currency in the province lay in foreign trade, as distinguished from coastwise commerce, since the specie of our ancestors, when they were so fortunate as to possess any, came from the West Indies in the form of Spanish dollars, Portuguese johannes, and their fractions.² When New Hampshire farmers sold their produce to Massachusetts merchants, they presumably received paper money in payment. When the Massachusetts middlemen resold the goods to the plantation owners of the Caribbean, they took in hard cash and made profits both as dealers and as shippers. How much better it would be if the flow of foreign gold and silver could be deflected to New Hampshire and if the profits of trading and shipping could accrue to the commercial princes of Portsmouth. But as long as the inland husbandmen found it easier and cheaper to float their goods down the river to Massachusetts or Connecticut than to haul them overland to the Piscataqua, the desired change could not be effected. The situation called for the construction of good roads from the interior to the sea, and Wentworth was the untiring advocate of that policy.

The Governor's argument was doubtless sound, but it appealed more immediately to the members of the Council than it did to those of the lower house. The latter agreed that roads were needed, but they did not choose to tax themselves and their constituents in order to provide them, and they suggested that

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 232, 274.

2. See Channing's *United States*, ii, 497-500.

the proprietors of undeveloped townships should be obliged to open highways through their domains. After all, in many cases the proprietors were those very merchants who were to be the chief beneficiaries of the proposed policy, and therefore, they should regard good roads as an investment rather than as an expense. Likewise, if a passable way was required through ungranted land, the proprietors and inhabitants of the neighboring towns would be benefited by its construction, and should advance the necessary funds with a guarantee of being reimbursed by the future grantees.¹ With this proviso, the Assembly adopted Wentworth's general recommendation, and the surveying of trans-provincial roads was begun.

Wentworth would have preferred to have the Assembly make an out and out appropriation for thoroughfares across New Hampshire, for he well knew that the proposed method was not likely to be efficient. But since the economy and sectionalism of the legislature made outright appropriations impossible, the Governor conceived an interesting substitute. Land in New Hampshire was held in fee simple, but grants made after 1741 were supposed to yield a small quitrent to the Crown each year. The proprietors and inhabitants of new towns were free from this incubus for ten years after the date of their charter,² but when that period had elapsed every landowner was expected to pay a quitrent on the basis of a shilling for every hundred acres. In this matter, as in some others, Benning Wentworth had been decidedly easy-going, and his nephew was now confronted with the unpleasant task not only of collecting quitrents coming due in the future, but also of extracting arrears from "the poor peasants." He knew well enough that this kind of land tenure was detested

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 195.

2. *John Wentworth to John Nelson*, March 29, 1770. Wentworth reduced the period of immunity to five years.

by the colonists, and that they found paying quitrents to a royal official suggestive of oppression. Nevertheless, the dues must be collected. How could this be accomplished with the least possible irritation to the people? John Wentworth decided that the solution lay in expending the revenue conspicuously for the good of the public, and from his point of view the money could be used to the best advantage in the construction of roads from the interior to Portsmouth. His scheme was as statesmanlike as it was astute, and fortunately it met with approval in England. In 1771 he devoted £500 of quitrent receipts to this purpose, and reported to the Colonial Secretary that he thus "procured more than two hundred miles of road to be opened and made passable from the western limits of the province to the seacoast, in parallel directions." And he was happy to add, "By this means, also, the recovery of arrearages has been voluntarily complied with, and has put the receipt of his Majesty's quitrents into an habitual and easy method, which in any other way would have cost the Crown much more money."¹

Roadbuilding in New Hampshire in the eighteenth century was not a matter of crushed stone and tar. Far from it! First the surveyor and his party explored the country to be traversed and blazed a rough trail; this was called "spotting" because pieces of bark were cut out of the trees along the line. Then followed a crew with axes, who felled the trees and removed the underbrush until there was an avenue three rods wide through the wilderness. This process was known as "cutting and clearing." The great trunks were hauled out of the way by teams of oxen or, if the land was boggy, they were laid together in rows and thus formed a solid though uneven causeway.² The completed road

1. *Colonial Office* (5), vol. 937, *Board of Trade Papers, New Hampshire*, no. 38; in the Public Record Office.

2. Belknap's *History of New Hampshire*, iii, 75 *et seq.*

was probably little more than a wide, rough bridle-path, bristling with stumps and flanked with brush, but one could easily travel over it on horseback or even persuade oxen to plod through it with wagons. The rest was left to time and development, and usually it was many a long year before the road became smooth enough for a coach or other horse-drawn vehicle.

This was the kind of road Governor Wentworth had in mind when he urged the construction of four great highways which should make Portsmouth "the first provision market in New England."¹ The first was designed to connect Durham, which is on tide-water, with the rich interval lands of the Connecticut River which lay in and about the town of Haverhill, then generally spoken of as the Lower Cohoss. A second should connect Charlestown on the Connecticut with Boscawen on the Merrimac. At that point it would join the Cohoss-Durham artery and thus connect Charlestown with the Piscataqua. A third road, starting at Wolfeborough, was to penetrate the White Hills and ultimately reach the waters of the Connecticut at Lancaster and Northumberland, a region known as the Upper Cohoss. As there was a reasonably good road from Wolfeborough to the sea, this extension would make it possible to travel by land from the most northern settlements to Portsmouth, and would lay the foundation for a thoroughfare between Quebec and the capital of New Hampshire.² Finally, the founding of Dartmouth College at Hanover called for a fourth highway through the wilds; this was to connect Hanover with Wolfeborough and hence with the Piscataqua region.³ It is not certain that these four great roads were completed during Wentworth's administration, but most of them

1. *John Wentworth to Hugh Hall Wentworth*, December 23, 1768.

2. *John Wentworth to H. T. Cramahé*, April 5, 1768.

3. For the action of the Assembly regarding roads, see *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 195, 196, 203, 234, 266, 284, 301, 306, 318, 351.

were at least surveyed and doubtless would have been constructed throughout their proposed length had not the unrest of the approaching revolution forced more urgent business upon both governor and Assembly.

Before John Wentworth came into power, one or two printed maps of New Hampshire existed, but they were as obsolete as they were crude, for one could hardly expect cartography to keep up with the expansion which attended the years following the Seven Years' War. By 1770, however, the granting of land had practically come to a standstill and there was need of a good map of the province. It so happened that a Captain Holland, who had been appointed surveyor general of the seacoast of the northern district of America, had time on his hands during the winter of 1770-1771, and expressed his willingness to survey as much of the mainland as time would permit, if the Assembly was willing to pay a nominal sum for his services. As Samuel Holland was an engineer of the first rank, Wentworth regarded him as heaven-sent and urged the legislature to embrace this unusual opportunity. The representatives of the people were not so enthusiastic; doubtless the expense involved looked larger to them than it did to his Excellency. At any rate, when the question was put before them in January, 1771, they voted in the negative.¹ This was disappointing; but the Governor did not abandon the idea. Just a year later he again urged the Assembly to avail itself of Captain Holland's proposition. He reminded the legislators that his instructions from Downing Street called for a map of the province and that he had deferred action because of the great cost. Now, however, the generosity of Holland had removed that objection, for that gentleman had agreed to make the survey for one hundred guineas, which he estimated would just cover the actual expenses of himself and his assistants. Went-

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 264, 268.

44 THE PROVINCE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

worth declared that under ordinary conditions the cost would be ten times as great! The suggestion of a bargain and the threat of higher prices were as persuasive then as now. With promptness that was almost precipitate, the Assembly granted the hundred guineas, and Holland and his deputies began their work immediately.

The resulting map is a joy to the eye, and also a source of abundant information for the antiquarian and the historian. Its beauty is equaled only by the accuracy of its detail, and when one compares the Holland Map with its amateurish predecessors, he stands amazed at the science and art of the generous Captain.¹ Owing to the Revolution, the work was not published until 1784. Then it was engraved in London by the direction and at the expense of Paul Wentworth, an intimate friend of the Governor. Happy indeed, is the collector whose treasures include a copy of this map.²

Besides his authority as a civil magistrate, the governor of New Hampshire enjoyed the powers of captain-general in his province. Thus Wentworth found himself commander-in-chief of the militia and guardian of whatever permanent forts existed in his province. This has a martial appearance on paper, but in reality there was but one garrisoned fort, and only with difficulty could the Assembly be persuaded to keep that one from falling to pieces. Fort William and Mary, ordinarily referred to as "the Castle," was situated on Great Island, in the town of New Castle, about three miles from the center of Portsmouth. It

1. Holland resided in Portsmouth at this time and seems to have taken an unusual interest in New Hampshire affairs. His generosity manifested itself again in a brass sun-dial which he presented to Dartmouth College. See Frederick Chase's *History of Dartmouth College*, p. 289.

2. There are two copies of the Holland Map in the library of Harvard University, and one in the cabinet of the New Hampshire Historical Society.

was an ancient edifice of stone and lime, which had become almost ruinous since the Peace of Paris. Nevertheless, its location was strategic, and the provincial government was willing to pay one officer and five men to stay there. This was the extent of New Hampshire's standing army. Year after year John Wentworth exhorted the Assembly to increase the establishment and to make appropriations for the repair of the Castle, but almost without effect. In 1771 the legislators grudgingly added three men to the garrison, but a year or two later they returned to the old schedule.

The militia was a more creditable affair. However averse our ancestors may have been to a standing army, they were by no means pacifists. They believed in a strong citizen soldiery and in compulsory military training. With the exception of a few exempted groups, all males between sixteen and sixty years of age were obliged to bear arms and to perform military drill on four days each year. Each man or boy had to provide himself with a musket and other necessary military equipment, and each town must keep a store of supplies on the basis of a barrel of powder, two hundred pounds of bullets, and three hundred flints for every sixty men of military age.¹ Thus every town or precinct could furnish a company of armed men upon a moment's notice. A number of companies combined to form a regiment, and each regiment was obliged to assemble for muster once in three years. This was the military system of the province of New Hampshire, which contained tremendous latent power of defense and avoided the dangers of a standing army.

In 1767 Wentworth found about ten thousand men in this organization, and, although they were "badly accoutred and scarcely at all disciplined," he recognized their possibilities and determined to build up a strong, well-regulated militia. It then

1. *Acts and Laws of New Hampshire* (edition of 1771), chap. lxvii.

46 THE PROVINCE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

comprised less than "eight regiments of foot and one regiment of horse." He intended to add two more regiments to the establishment and thus to increase by sixteen hundred the total number of men under arms.¹ This proved to be an easy matter in such a rapidly growing colony, and in 1773 Wentworth's forces consisted of twelve regiments.² Not in numbers alone had the militia gained, for the young Governor's enthusiasm had infused new life into the organization of which he was commander-in-chief. He attended the regimental reviews whenever it was possible for him to do so, and his personal interest was felt by every officer and man. Unwittingly he was organizing and drilling the brave lads, who, under the command of Colonel Stark, won everlasting glory for New Hampshire at the Battle of Bunker Hill.

1. *John Wentworth to the Board of Trade*, March 25, 1768.

2. C. E. Potter's *Military History of New Hampshire*, pp. 260-262.

CHAPTER V.

THE KING'S WOODS

SOON after the founding of the New England colonies the British government realized that in the American forests it had acquired an almost inexhaustible supply of timber fit for masts, yards, and bowsprits. For a half-century the Admiralty rejoiced in this wealth of naval resources without thought of conservation, but when colonial affairs were reorganized after the accession of William and Mary precautionary measures in this respect seemed advisable. Therefore, in the new charter issued to the people of Massachusetts in 1691, their Majesties reserved to the Crown "all trees of the diameter of twenty-four inches and upwards" growing on land not already granted to private persons. This meant that ownership of pine trees of that size should not accompany title to the soil in any future grants in Massachusetts, and that anyone "felling, cutting, or destroying any such trees without the royal license" would be liable to a fine of £100 per tree. Just why Massachusetts was discriminated against in this way, while the people of New Hampshire and the other northern colonies might continue to cut and slash as they chose, does not appear. Perhaps it was because the best pines in America were supposed to grow in the District of Maine, which belonged to the Bay Colony, but more probably the exemption was due to an oversight. At any rate, the principle was soon extended to her neighbors.¹ Parliament forbade the destruction of

1. The development of this policy may be traced in the following statutes: 2 Anne, Cap. 17, 8 George I, Cap. 12, and 2 George II, Cap. 35. See also various town charters in *New Hampshire State Papers*, xxiv, xxv, xxvi.

any pine trees whatsoever growing upon land that had not been laid out in townships. This preserved the pines of the great ungranted wilderness, "the King's woods," and as new townships were carved out of the interior this conservation was continued to a certain extent by a clause in the town charters. In New York this clause reserved as crown property all pines measuring twenty-four inches or more in diameter; in New Hampshire the reservation applied to "all white and other pine trees, fit for masting our royal navy." These remained a part of the King's woods, and he who felled them without leave must pay a heavy penalty.

The guardianship of these royal trees was entrusted to an officer entitled the Surveyor General of his Majesty's Woods. He was assisted by four deputies, who were expected to go through the woods "at all convenient times and seasons" and mark with the broad-arrow of the British government all sound, straight pines of sufficient dimensions for masts. In this way the future grantee of the land might know what timber was inviolable. Furthermore, the surveyor should make an index of all these trees and thus be able to produce a given number of sticks for the navy whenever authorized to do so by the Admiralty. In the meantime, he would prosecute any wayward colonist who failed to respect this manifestation of the royal prerogative.¹

When the Lords of the Admiralty contrived this scheme, they naturally thought in terms of English forests, and to them the plan sounded quite practicable. All the desirable trees could be marked and registered within a short space of time, and then the surveyor general's duties would be light indeed. Perhaps they should have realized that the pine-bearing wilderness of America

1. There is a copy of John Wentworth's commission for this service among the "British Transcripts" in the Library of Congress at Washington. LC 295: P.R.O. C.O. 324, 52, p. 67.

covered at least one hundred thousand square miles and that the number of trees fit for masts was countless, but those were the days when the Secretary of State immediately in charge of the colonies frequently referred to New England as an island, and the Duke of Newcastle was amazed to discover that Cape Breton was not a part of the mainland. Under such circumstances, it would be unreasonable to blame their Lordships of the Admiralty for lack of information or imagination regarding the extent of America's forests.

When Wentworth arrived in New Hampshire in the summer of 1767, he knew well enough that he and his four assistants could not mark all the trees which should ultimately be saved for the Crown. In the more settled parts the broad-arrow might well be engraved upon an occasional pine as a reminder to the inhabitants, but the thought of marking every large tree in the wilderness was absurd. It seemed to him that if the provisions of the statute were advertised, the people might be held responsible for their observance, whether the reserved timber bore the insignia of the Admiralty or not. On this principle, at any rate, he intended to commence his administration.

In order to appreciate the difficulty of Wentworth's position, one must realize that the mast-conservation law had been a dead letter for more than a generation. One of the charges against Benning Wentworth had been his failure to perform satisfactorily his duties as surveyor general of his Majesty's woods. He paid £2000 for the appointment¹ and drew regularly his salary of £200,² but the efficiency of his administration may be guessed from the fact that at least one of his deputies resided comfortably in Ireland, three thousand miles from the tall white pines en-

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, xviii, 566.

2. *Ibid.*, vi, 914.

trusted to his care.¹ It is not unlikely that Uncle Benning remembered the troubles of his predecessor, one David Dunbar, and prudently decided not to attempt enforcement of the law.

Dunbar was surveyor general about the year 1735. He was also a retired colonel in the British army and a man who believed in military methods. One unfortunate day he heard that a number of logs of large dimensions were being illegally cut into boards at a saw-mill in Dover, and he sallied forth to do his duty. Much as the colonists disliked the law which forbade their felling large pine trees, they disliked even more the high-handed manner in which David Dunbar chose to enforce it. Like so many officers sent out from England, before and after his time, Dunbar shut his eyes to the fact that the Americans were very human beings, with whom tact was infinitely more effective than blunt assertion of authority. Arriving at Dover, he seized a pile of boards and ordered his boat's crew to remove them. According to the law he might seize and libel, but removal must wait upon condemnation by a court of admiralty. The owner of the boards knew this and warned Dunbar, whereupon the latter was obliged to back down, — which he did with very bad grace. Upon another occasion the surveyor general sent a crew to remove some suspected timber at Exeter. At first, all went well, but while the men were taking their ease at a public house, a number of persons disguised as Indians made a surprise attack, gave them a good beating, and so wrecked their boat that they were obliged to return to Portsmouth on foot.²

Probably Benning Wentworth, being an American, would have been able to deal with the frontiersmen without becoming involved in awkward situations of this kind, but for one reason or another he preferred to let the statute fall into peaceful oblivion.

1. *John Wentworth to Col. John Bradstreet*, Nov. 2, 1767.

2. Belknap's *New Hampshire*, ii, 113.

There it remained until July, 1767, when John Wentworth succeeded his uncle in this office.

The new surveyor general was both a reasonable human being and a conscientious administrator. Realizing that twenty-five years of non-enforcement had probably led the colonists to forget the existence of the mast-conservation laws, he asked his colleague, Governor Bernard of Massachusetts, to issue a proclamation reminding the people of Massachusetts and of the District of Maine of the provisions of the statutes and warning them that now they were to be strictly enforced. Wentworth handed copies of this manifesto to his deputies for the regions concerned, with instructions to post them in conspicuous places throughout the settlements. He also directed them to seize and libel all pine logs they might find, which had been wrongfully cut, and have them condemned in the court of admiralty at Boston. After condemnation the timber should be sold at public auction in the country where the guilty parties resided, thus impressing the people with the actuality of the law and spreading its fame through the wilderness.¹ For their past sins offenders should not be fined, but if they did not reform they should suffer the full penalty of the law in the future.

For a year or two the preservation of the King's woods progressed with surprising smoothness. Now and then the Surveyor General found it necessary to prosecute individuals, and did so vigorously, but he made it his wise rule not to institute proceedings unless conviction was practically certain. Probably he exaggerated the good results of his administration when he assured his superiors in England that not one hundredth part of the usual illegal destruction of timber had occurred during the first year of his stewardship, but he seems to have been singularly successful in changing the attitude of the people towards his thankless

1. *John Wentworth to the Secretaries of State*, September 3, 1767.

office. Within a few months the old hostility disappeared, and actual friendliness took its place.¹ This extraordinary metamorphosis can be accounted for only by the good sense, tact, and personality of John Wentworth. Perhaps his treatment of the lawless inhabitants of the banks of the Androscoggin provides the best example of his administrative methods.

In the spring of 1769 word reached the Surveyor General that sundry persons in the vicinity of Brunswick, Maine, were cutting white pine trees of large dimensions. Thereupon he directed his deputy in that part of the country to investigate and, if the report proved to be true, to seize the timber. The deputy went to Brunswick and found the destroyed trees, but seizing the logs was a different matter. The trespassers so terrified him "by their violent menaces" that he decided to retire and to report the situation to his chief. According to his account the men of Brunswick threatened death to anyone who should presume to seize their spoils. This was just enough to stimulate all the Wentworth blood in the Surveyor General's veins, and he declared that he would go to the Androscoggin and execute the law himself.² Commodore Hood, who was in American waters at that time, detailed the sloop of war *Beaver* to bear him to the eastward, whither he sailed in late July. Arriving at the mouth of the "Wiscasset River," Wentworth carefully divested himself of all military or naval assistance. Accompanied by only an assistant deputy, a servant, and a boatman, none of whom was armed, he was conveyed "through many rivers" to the saw-mills on the Androscoggin "where all the logs had floated together." Then without delay he notified the people of his business and invited them to meet him on the riverbank. At the appointed time they assembled from far and near — attracted no doubt, by the prospect of

1. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough*, June 25, 1768.

2. *John Wentworth to Judge Auchmuty*, April 10, 1769.

a little excitement — and with them, by special request of the Surveyor General, came a justice of peace. When the crowd had gathered, Wentworth talked to them in a straightforward manner, letting them know that he was aware of their trespasses and their threats, and that he was resolved to execute the acts of Parliament notwithstanding. Then he read the particular statute involved and explained the purpose of the government in preserving timber of this kind for the use of the navy. If his hearers were serious in their determination to resist the enforcement of the law, he wished that they would commence their opposition then and there. Although he had come armed with no power or force except the acts of Parliament, he expected "that the laws would be protection enough for those that were legally executing them."

After a long pause "an old man stepped forth and desired to be heard. He said that the people were poor, depended much upon procuring timber for their subsistence; that they had been under errors, supposing a right to the soil, when actually served to them, gave also a title to the timber of all kinds; but that they now plainly saw the contrary, except in such tracts as were actually improved and legally possessed as private property before the year 1690." After this explanatory preamble he admitted "that it was likely some warm, indiscreet men might say unadvised things about this business," but that Wentworth might rest assured that not one man among them would oppose him or any of his deputies. On the contrary, they would aid him at all times and would attend and guard him while he remained in that region, if he anticipated "the least insult or disrespect. To this speech every man with one voice assented."¹

Wentworth must have been amazed at this unqualified submission, but he replied in a dignified manner and made it clear

1. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough*, October 22, 1770.

that he thought they had chosen the part of wisdom. The rest of the story is best told in his own words, if one is willing to struggle further with his unconventional construction of sentences. "I singled out one man who had been the most zealous and warm in the scheme of making the country too hot for officers (as they termed it), and required him to aid and carry me off in his canoe upon the river — my boat could not come up above the falls — and there help me to seize and mark five hundred logs, which belonged to him and the rest who waited on the banks of the river within thirty yards; which he directly performed and we returned to the people in whose presence I delivered the logs into the care of the magistrate; and informed them I would stay that night at the inn adjacent, and in the morning consider any claims they might offer for the logs. And they might consider whether they would abide by their present resolutions of obeying the law. In the morning the whole party came to me, and to a man expressed their fixed resolutions the same as the preceding day, — that they surrendered all claim of property in the logs I had seized, which they owned to have cut upon the lesser rivers in the winter preceding."

This expedition was by no means Wentworth's sole journey into the wilderness. He devoted a large part of the summer of 1768 to exploring those remote areas of ungranted timberland which he called "the King's woods." John Wentworth loved life in the open air above all things, and he really enjoyed the hardships and adventures of these excursions into the wild country. Nevertheless, he took care that the authorities in England should know that the performance of his duties was as fatiguing as it was efficient. In other letters, too, he referred to his "slender constitution" and the danger involved in these strenuous expeditions, but he who reads between the lines cannot avoid the conviction that this was pose, pure and simple. Can one believe,

for instance, that the writer of the following sentences did not enjoy his daily thrill? "My duty in the woods calls me so often into such sad countries that every day's travel is almost a miracle. However, I have not yet even broke a bone; and as to drowning, I begin to think it a mere fable as I am frequently upon great lakes in a hollow log, sometimes plunged into rivers endeavouring to pass on a single tree. But always somebody or other pulls me out again, — for I can't swim, and it is, therefore, the more kind in them." ¹

After the Androscoggin episode, the Surveyor General sailed up the coast to Halifax in the hope of finding a large tract of timberland which the Crown might advantageously reserve in its entirety for the use of the navy. His orders called for two hundred thousand acres in Nova Scotia, bordering on the ocean and traversed by navigable rivers. About eighteen miles west of Halifax he found just what he sought, but, being without power to appropriate it himself, he left the matter to be settled by the local governor and the Lords of the Admiralty.² In the summer of 1773, Wentworth went through the woods "from Winnepesiockett Pond to White River Falls on Connecticut River, thence up the said river to the 45th degree of latitude, and thence by another direction through the pathless wilderness down to the seacoast." His primary object on these travels was to obtain a good general knowledge of the forests so that he might know where the best pine growth was situated and where, incidentally, he might look for trouble in the future. Such was probably the reason for his exploring the coast from Portsmouth to Machias in the same year, but the fact that "Mr. Levi, the Jew" had shipped to London some lumber which was in process of condemnation at

1. *John Wentworth to Joseph Harrison*, September 24, 1769.

2. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough*, October 22, 1770.

Gouldsboro, doubtless added to Wentworth's desire to visit the region of Mount Desert.¹

The journey that does most credit to the Surveyor General was made in January, 1769, and its results were as interesting as the expedition was fatiguing. Excepting the District of Maine, where there were pine trees one hundred and fifty feet tall and five or six feet through at the butt, the west bank of the Connecticut River produced the best mast-timber in America. Here a few bold spirits trespassed openly upon the King's woods and relied upon the remoteness of their situation and the discomfort of a trip across New Hampshire in midwinter to keep them out of trouble. In doing so, however, they reckoned without an adequate valuation of the spirit and energy of John Wentworth. When reports of their misdeeds reached Portsmouth, the Surveyor General forgot for the time being his "frail constitution" and set out immediately through the ice and snow with the hope of catching the offenders red-handed. His way led "through a wilderness almost uninhabited," but this had its advantages if one wished to take the enemy by surprise, as Wentworth most certainly did. Near Windsor, Vermont, he came upon them while they were at work in the woods, where they had cut down seventeen white pine mast-trees from twenty-eight to forty inches in diameter and from eighty to one hundred feet in length. The offenders were a man named Deane and his two sons, William and Willard. Besides the trees lying on the ground, there were hundreds of logs in the river. Wentworth seized all this timber, left it under guard, and then returned to Portsmouth, "having traveled three hundred miles in excessive cold and snow" in just sixteen days. But this was not the end of the Deane case.

The appropriate court of admiralty for the west bank of the Connecticut River was situated at New York. Thither the Sur-

1. *John Wentworth to Joshua Loring, Jr.*, April 9, 1773.

veyor General transmitted his information and complaint, for in this case he intended both to recover the timber stolen from his Majesty and to prosecute the trespassers. A warrant for their arrest was issued in due course, but meanwhile the Deane family, aware of their danger, had "absconded into some other provinces," where they concealed themselves successfully. Wentworth was annoyed, but would not admit defeat. He decided to bide his time. It was not unlikely that if he lay low, the Deanes would emerge from their seclusion and revisit Windsor, where he would have them seized by the deputy marshal. His guess could not have been better. In the course of a few months William and Willard Deane were arrested and carried to New York. The father soon shared their fate, and when the next winter set in, the trio found themselves in a jail on Manhattan Island awaiting trial.

About this time the case became unexpectedly exciting for all concerned. It so happened that a number of rich men in the metropolis owned great tracts of timberland in the interior, but apparently they had never taken the conservation acts of Parliament seriously. Perhaps they had never been aware of their existence. Now, however, the prospect of enforcement so alarmed one and all that they engaged "a great patriot lawyer," James Duane, and made the case of the trespassers their own. For a few weeks the town seethed with excitement. Agitators declared that the enforcement of the timber-conservation laws would be more injurious to landholders than the Stamp Act. Just why this was so they did not state. Proof of the point was unnecessary, for at the mention of the Stamp Act the hearers invariably lost their reasoning powers and joined the forces of opposition.¹ As if this

1. Referring to the Stamp Act, Wentworth wrote, "which word is as infectious in America as the plague, and as unaccountably seizes upon the strongest constitutions." *John Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough*, October 22, 1770.

were not enough, Judge Wells of Brattleborough came to town and became very active in behalf of the Deanes, whose case, he declared, was pitiable rather than criminal. The longer justice was delayed, the less encouraging the situation appeared to Wentworth, but he was careful to proceed slowly lest there should be the additional grievance of an untimely trial. At last the day of judgment arrived. The senior Deane and his two sons were found guilty and were fined in accordance with the statute, a full decree in favor of the Crown being given by Judge Morris.

For a moment Wentworth enjoyed the relief and satisfaction which accompany the successful completion of a difficult job, — but only for a moment, for when the government attempted to collect the amount of the fines by selling the private effects of the Deane family, it transpired that the culprits had transferred all their goods and chattels to their friend, Judge Wells, and consequently were bankrupt for the time being. As the law did not extend to their real estate, the entire cost of an expensive prosecution was thrown upon the Crown. This was precisely the intention of his Honor Judge Wells who, perceiving that the case was likely to go against the Deanes, had persuaded them to make him trustee of their personal property. It was a clever manipulation of the law and evokes one's admiration for Wells' ingenuity, — although hardly for his sense of propriety. Its effect upon John Wentworth, however, was not limited to admiration, especially when he learned that his adversary had returned home boasting that the Surveyor General would soon sicken of such expensive prosecutions. In the meantime the Deanes remained in "a comfortable gaol" at New York, where they were "supported in affluence" by those who sympathized with their cause.

Wentworth bore them no malice; neither did he treasure any resentment toward James Duane, the "great patriot lawyer"; but for a crown magistrate who would twist the laws of convey-

ance to defeat the laws for preserving mast-timber he had unlimited contempt. Whenever he thought of Judge Wells, John Wentworth became righteously indignant, and he determined to run him out of the service. He reported his acts to the governor of New York and also to the authorities in England. From the former he could not have expected much support, for New York and New Hampshire were practically at war with each other throughout this period because of their dispute over the New Hampshire Grants, and a man who could defeat the governor of New Hampshire on any issue was looked upon with favor on the west side of the Connecticut. It is not surprising, therefore, that Governor Colden's committee for investigating the behavior of Judge Wells reported that they could not see sufficient cause to advise his removal from office, and they embraced the opportunity to include in their remarks an impertinent reference to "the unjustifiable claim of the province of New Hampshire."¹ Better results were looked for in England, but unfortunately the Colonial Secretary in Downing Street had too much else on his mind to give more than passing notice to Wentworth's complaint. Although the Surveyor General never achieved his object, future events sustained his conviction that Wells was a slippery individual. One would have expected the Judge to be a prominent patriot in the approaching revolution, but when the time came he was neither one thing nor the other. At the beginning of the conflict he was a semi-Loyalist, and later his relations with the governor of Canada became so suspicious that he found it advisable to take refuge within the British lines at New York.

The further adventures of the Deane trio deserve mention, because they show the kind of human stuff John Wentworth was made of. A few weeks after their conviction, the admiralty judge wrote Wentworth that he believed the two young men were not so

1. E. B. O'Callaghan's *Documentary History of New York*, iv, 646.

culpable as their father, and that he was inclined to release them from jail if the Surveyor General had no objection. Wentworth not only gave his consent, but added that he hoped the judge would liberate all three, for, if "the terror of example" had been effected, as he believed it had, there was no point in adding to the sum of human misery by persecuting these individuals. Thus ended the case of the Deanes, who, let us hope, returned to the woods of Windsor with the fear of the Lord in their hearts and a wholesome respect for the office and character of John Wentworth.¹

Granted that the mast-timber conservation laws were annoying to the English colonists, did not Wentworth do all in his power to combine efficient execution with a minimum amount of exasperation? Like all good executives, when he decided to hit, he hit hard; but it is equally true that he treated the law-abiding with uncommon consideration. When he authorized the cutting of a man's pine trees in order to fill an order for the navy, he invariably took care that the owner of the soil should be given the preference in hauling and delivering them to the contractor. Thus whatever resentment a Yankee might feel at the royal appropriation was assuaged by the jingle of coin in his pocket, as he drove his oxen home from the river. Tact such as this is akin to genius.

1. For the case from the Deanes' point of view, see Benjamin Homer Hall's *History of Eastern Vermont*, i, 146-158.

CHAPTER VI.

MRS. THEODORE ATKINSON, JR.

EARLY in the summer of 1770 John Adams made a journey from Braintree to "Falmouth in Casco Bay," which we now call Portland, Maine. His shortest route lay through Portsmouth, but he turned from the main road at Greenland meeting-house in order to visit an aged uncle who resided in Newington. With frankness characteristic of his family Adams described the old gentleman as "vain and loquacious, though somewhat learned and entertaining"; nevertheless, he seems to have preferred his relative's society to that which he would have found at Portsmouth. His diary for that day, at any rate, contains the following ungracious entry:¹

By accidentally taking this new route, I have avoided Portsmouth, and my old friend the Governor of it. But I must make my compliments to him as I return. It is a duty; — he is my friend and I am his. I should have seen enough of the pomps and vanities and ceremonies of that little world, Portsmouth, if I had gone there; but formalities and ceremonies are an abomination in my sight; — I hate them in religion, government, science, life.

A few years earlier John Wentworth wrote from Portsmouth: "This is a dull place for cards; I have not won enough lately to pay the postage of a letter." These two opinions, so different in point of view, give us some conception of the close corporation which constituted Portsmouth society before the Revolution. Its church was the Church of England; its wealth came from export-

1. John Adams's *Works*, ii, 241.

ing lumber to the sugar islands and from importing rum in return. But all the lumber in New Hampshire and all the rum in the West Indies would not admit one to the charmed circle of aristocracy unless the aspirant was otherwise acceptable. The Brahmin caste included the Atkinsons, the Jaffreys, the Peirces, the Rindges, the Sherburnes, the Warners, the Wentworths, and the Wibirds; but the greatest of these were the Wentworths, who, for three generations, governed the province and dominated the court life of Portsmouth. This was the "little world" for which John Adams expressed his scorn, and one may surmise with what coolness he would have been received in its midst, — he, an impecunious lawyer from Massachusetts with republican views and no hesitation about expressing them, a Congregationalist who had married the daughter of a Congregational minister. His mother was a Boylston, to be sure, and that gave him a claim for recognition anywhere in New England, but as Mr. Adams never pressed this claim one was apt to forget that he differed in any way from the other agitators in vulgar Massachusetts. Had he been born in Portsmouth, he might have overcome these social handicaps by marrying a daughter of one of the established families, for new blood was sometimes infused into the aristocracy in this way. In act, the right kind of outsider might even remain a Congregationalist and be accepted if his wife was one of the élite, but few could attain the inner circle or expect high offices from the governor unless they worshipped at Queen's Chapel and belonged to the blue-blooded flock of the Reverend Arthur Browne.

Perhaps the superficiality of Portsmouth's social structure ought to have troubled John Wentworth as much as it did his intolerant classmate, but it does not seem to have done so. Wentworth was born into it and accepted it as the natural order of things. His acquaintance, of course, extended to other classes of society — his friendships too, for that matter — but naturally

the greatest community of interest was found in the little ring whose ancestors had turned Strawberry Bank into the prosperous commercial metropolis of northern New England. Like a modern prince he discovered much to interest him in the people of the outside world; he respected their initiative, admired their energy, and sympathized with many of their aspirations, but he did not often find their society so congenial as that of the court in which he had grown up. For display, as such, he had no fondness, but he believed that the dignity of government should be constantly borne in mind by the people. If this could be aided by formality and magnificence, it was his duty to employ those externals besides administering to the best of his ability the actual business of the province. Hence, if he rode to Boston to discover why a Massachusetts marshal had declined to carry out the orders of the surveyor general, he traveled in a coach and required accommodations for twelve horses and eight servants.¹ On the other hand, when he went as a private citizen to his plantation at Wolfborough, he mounted a favorite horse and with one or two companions galloped over the happy road without a thought of princely pomp or churchman's pride.

New Hampshire possessed no province house in which to lodge its governor, but in order to provide an abode for John Wentworth the assembly hired a dignified two-and-a-half storied house on Pleasant Street, and placed it at his disposal. The house belonged to a Mr. Fisher² and could have been bought for about £1700, but the shrewd legislators preferred to rent it for £67 per annum, an amount which the owner complained was less than half the lawful interest on the capital invested.³ Here the bachelor Governor was installed soon after his return from England,

1. *John Wentworth to Joshua Loring, Jr.*, May 3, 1769.

2. This was probably John Fisher, who married the Governor's sister Anna.

3. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 264-265.

and here he continued to reside until the summer of 1775. It was an unpretentious edifice, but when one regards it today, a stately though weather-beaten building — too near the road, perhaps, but half hidden by ancient lindens — he must feel that Wentworth was hardly just when he described it as “a small hut with little, comfortable apartments.” His description of its surroundings, however, was more appreciative. “On the one side (we have too much modesty to call it front), we look over the town and down the river to the boundless Atlantic Ocean; on the other side we overlook a place for a garden, bounded or rather separated from the fields by a large sea-water pond, which enlivens the rural scene.”¹

The interior of this “good, warm, little dwelling” received no small amount of attention from the Governor. He had occupied it hardly a month before he ordered wall papers from Boston, some of a specified kind, and the rest “of any pretty, fanciful, and cheap satin.”² Furniture, too, was brought from Boston, and in the course of a few months his Excellency had accomplished his object of making “a Lilliputian Wentworth House here.” The atmosphere of the Marquis’s great house was partially reproduced by a retinue of Yorkshire servants whom Wentworth had brought over with him, but, as the genial host expressed it, “to resemble the original essentially we endeavor to make every one as happy as we can.”³

For companionship at home the Governor depended upon his cousin, Michael Wentworth, a retired colonel in the British Army, who had recently migrated from England in order to try his luck in America. Although the Colonel was Wentworth’s senior by ten or fifteen years, the two men had much in common, especially

1. *John Wentworth to William Bayard*, July 3, 1767.

2. Some of the original flock-paper adorns the walls today (1920).

3. *John Wentworth to Joseph Harrison*, February 13, 1768.

a passion for horses. The Governor had the greater number of animals, but the Colonel had the proud distinction of having ridden from Boston to Portsmouth in ten hours.¹ Both were fond of music, too, and to complete the analogy each ultimately, married a widow. Michael Wentworth's bride was none other than the relict of Benning Wentworth, née Martha Hilton, who had unexpectedly inherited an ample fortune. The latter fact, of course, was not wholly displeasing to the Colonel; he moved into the mansion at Little Harbor and in the course of a few years succeeded in spending all his own property and most of his wife's as well. According to local tradition his dying words were, "I have had my cake and ate it," — but that is another story. In 1767 he was merely a jovial single gentleman, whose experiences and personality made him a most agreeable companion.

The lot of a housekeeping bachelor is not altogether enviable, and if John Wentworth felt any uncertainty on this point he was soon to be convinced. When he casually ordered bacon in July, he learned that there was none to be had in the market. This was a new idea to one whose least wish at home and abroad had always been anticipated. Nothing daunted, however, he wrote to a friend in New York and entreated him to ship fifteen hams and fifteen chaps to "a young, unprovided housekeeper."² Even more troublesome was the question of fuel. There was wood enough, no doubt, but the Governor wanted coal as well, and the nearest coal pits were near Louisburg on Cape Breton Island.³ Since these were owned by the British government and administered by the governor of Nova Scotia, one may well conjecture that a considerable period of time elapsed between an order and its delivery, even when the order came from the governor of New

1. Brewster's *Rambles*, i, 102.

2. *John Wentworth to William Bayard*, July 15, 1767.

3. *John Wentworth to Lord William Campbell*, June 24, 1767.

Hampshire. Then, too, there was the eternal servant problem. When Wentworth arrived from England, he was well equipped with domestic help, as we have already noted, but these people no sooner breathed the free air of America than they became ambitious to be something more than butlers and footmen. Wentworth would not, and probably could not, stand in their way, and within a year or two he found his household exceedingly short-handed. To fill the vacancies, he could have bought the services of poor immigrants who had met the expenses of the voyage by mortgaging their labor for a period of years to the captain of the ship. But the quality of this kind of help was variable, to say the least, whereas the Governor wanted only the best. The only thing for him to do was to write to some good friend in England and ask him to send out two footmen, "two that can play well on a French horn; also, if they can, or one of them, play on a violin."¹ If talent of this kind were procurable and if the men would serve him faithfully for five years, the desperate employer agreed to pay them whatever wages his friend might recommend, and, at the end of their period of service, to give each of them one hundred acres of good land in a settled country and whatever "little government place of profit" he might be qualified to fill. One might reasonably demand perfection of servants engaged under such terms, but the rest of Wentworth's letter suggests that the situation in 1769 was fully as difficult as it is today. "Mr. Inman, my tailor, will clothe them in my livery, and the mastship, or any other ship to this port, will bring them out to me. It is not of any consideration to me what country or religion, if they are good, well-tempered, honest, capable men. I will do more for them than they can ever expect in Europe. Neither is it essential that their musical execution should be of the first rate as we are not great connoisseurs in that way."

1. *John Wentworth to Paul Wentworth*, September 17, 1769.

Across the way from the Governor's house stood a large stable, in which Wentworth kept the sixteen horses which were his most precious possessions.¹ Some of these he had brought with him from England, others were gifts or purchases from his friends in the Middle and Southern colonies. Perhaps the most interesting, although hardly the most satisfactory, were the four steeds he bought from Colonel Peter Randolph, while on his way from Charleston to Portsmouth. In some respects they were the best horses in the world, for, according to their purchaser, they could neither tire with labor nor starve though without food. "But," wrote he, "they are not adapted for this pious country. They will not draw my chariot on Sunday; each pair have run rusty and restive on that day, maugre whip and spur, but on other days are orderly enough. I begin to be suspicious they are heretical, and as fire and faggot seldom reclaim schismatics, I have ordered them to have no more Sunday chastisements, lest (like Rousseau) they glory in the sufferings of obstinacy."²

Second only to his horses were the Governor's carriages. These varied in capacity and style from the stately coach to "a little sulky one-horse chair for one person," which was made to order at Philadelphia in accordance with Wentworth's minute instructions. His specifications called for a sulky "on steel springs, with wheels at least four inches lower than our good friend Mr. Foxcroft's, to be painted the lightest straw-color and gilt mouldings, with my crest and cypher (as on the seal of this letter) inclosed in a plain oval without the least ornament, and rather in a small compass." It is safe to assume that neither before nor since that day has Portsmouth beheld a smarter sporting rig than this.

In the early autumn of 1769, Copley, who had already achieved the reputation of being the best portrait-painter in America, was

1. Brewster's *Rambles*, i, 112.

2. *John Wentworth to William Byrd*, June 23, 1767.

invited to Portsmouth to try his skill in delineating the features of the Governor of New Hampshire.¹ This was not the first portrait for which Wentworth sat, however, for in the summer of 1766 "Wilson of Great Queen Street, Long Acre," had produced a very artistic picture of him.² In it one sees Wentworth holding in his hand a scroll, which was doubtless intended to represent his commission, for it bears the words "New Hampshire" on a surface which catches the light. This portrait was presented to the Marquis of Rockingham, and still hangs in the gallery of Wentworth House (now Wentworth Woodhouse) in Yorkshire. Probably the Governor departed for America before the picture was completed, for in a letter written to a relative in England a few years later he asked, "Is it a likeness?" And that is precisely the question which comes to our minds today, especially when we compare the Wilson portrait with the equally beautiful and somehow more convincing picture which Copley drew at Portsmouth in the autumn of 1769. The latter is a pastel of great beauty. It shows us the face of a handsome, intelligent aristocrat, giving the general impression of amiability but saved from weakness by a resolute New England chin. One would expect such a man to be the best of good company on almost any occasion, but one would be careful not to take undue advantage of his good nature. Whether the Copley pastel was really the better likeness of the two no one can say, but it certainly emphasizes the qualities which we inevitably associate with John Wentworth, — amiability, intelligence, resolution, and physical vigor.³

1. "I expect Copley here next week to take my picture which I kindly thank you for accepting." *John Wentworth to Paul Wentworth*, October 27, 1769.

2. *John Wentworth to Paul Wentworth*, October 27, 1769.

3. According to a memorandum in the Governor's letter-book, the original portrait was sent to his favorite kinsman, Paul Wentworth "in Poland St., Soho, London," on January 6, 1770. Copley made a copy for his Excellency and sent it to Portsmouth in the following spring. See Massachusetts His-

In the midst of Copley's visit an event occurred which, as far as Wentworth was concerned, made the progress of his portrait a matter of little importance. On the twenty-eighth of October, Theodore Atkinson, Jr., the secretary of the province, died "after many years' decline." Atkinson was an estimable young man, and to the community as a whole it seemed a pity that he should die of consumption at the early age of thirty-three years, especially as he was an only son. His widow was the daughter of Samuel Wentworth, a prominent Boston merchant, who was a brother of Mrs. Atkinson, Sr., and of Mark Hunking Wentworth. Hence the young lady must have been a first cousin of her late husband, and also of the Governor. It is equally certain that she was one of the most beautiful women in America. Fortunately for us, Copley painted her portrait in 1765 and preserved for all time her appearance at nineteen or twenty. Artists may expatiate upon Copley's skill in depicting the lights and shadows in her satin gown, but the attention and interest of the lay observer are captured by the exquisite beauty of Mrs. Atkinson's face and form.¹ Quality is apparent in every feature and line. There is not a great amount of character, to be sure, but an abun-

torical Society's *Collections*, lxxi, 88. One of these pastels is now owned by Mrs. Gordon Abbott of Boston; the other is in the possession of Miss Susan J. Wentworth of Portsmouth.

J. Winslow Peirce, Esq., of Portsmouth, owns an oil portrait of Governor Wentworth, which is attributed to Copley. Of this picture Professor Barrett Wendell has kindly given me the following description: "The figure resembles that in the pastel, and is similarly posed, showing the same side of the face at about the same angle. The face is much handsomer, though; the nose looks longer and more delicate, and there is no trace of the supercilious air which one feels in the pastel. The coat is red velvet, with gold braid along the edge; it is cut much like that in the pastel. The waistcoat, less evident than in the pastel, looks like red satin. There is a fine shirt-frill, — at that time, I think, a new fashion."

1. The portrait, now somewhat restored, is in the gallery of the New York Public Library.

dance of animation, grace, and charm; and one is not surprised to learn that Theodore Atkinson, Jr. married her before her seventeenth birthday. After eight years of married life, and without children, she was now a widow at twenty-four, — but her widowhood was not to be of long duration.

Atkinson's funeral took place on the afternoon of November 1, 1769, upon which occasion the chief executive directed that minute guns be discharged at the Castle, and on board a warship in the harbor, in honor of the deceased.¹ Ten days later the following despatch was sent to the *Boston News Letter*:

This morning His Excellency John Wentworth, Esq., our worthy and beloved Governor, was married by the Rev. Mr. Brown, to Mrs. Atkinson, Relict of the Hon. Theodore Atkinson, jun. Esq., deceased. A Lady adorned with every Accomplishment requisite to make the Marriage State agreeable. Long! may this amiable and illustrious Couple live happily (Blessings to each other and all around them) in this World, and may [they] be the Crown of each other's Joy in the next, when the great Governor of all Worlds shall make up his Jewells. The Day is spending in innocent Mirth — the Colours of the Shipping in the Harbour are displayed — all the Bells are ringing — and the Cannon roaring, — in a word Joy sits smiling in every Countenance on this happy Occasion — Happy, thrice happy the Ruler! thus riveted in the Hearts and Affections of his people.²

1. *John Wentworth to Captain Bellew*, October 31, 1769.

2. *Massachusetts Gazette: and Boston News-Letter*, November 17, 1769. The *New Hampshire Gazette* contained a similar item, to which the inspired editor ventured to add:

“May this thrice happy, happy PAIR!
Be Heav'n's peculiar Charge and Care:
Unerring Wisdom guide their Way;
Their Joys increase with each new Day,
Until their pleasant Scenes arise
To th' top of Bliss, beneath the Skies!
At some far distant, distant Time,
Quit every Scene in this low Clime,
Rise to Heav'n's Empyrean Ground!
And with ETERNAL LIFE BE CROWN'D.”



Not long after their wedding the Governor had occasion to christen a newly incorporated town in the central part of the province. Naturally he chose the name of his bride and called the area Francestown. About the same time he gave her mother's maiden name to the township of Deering, just as he had already given that of his own maternal ancestor to Rindge.

For a number of years John Wentworth and his lady were not blessed with children of their own, but the Governor made himself a very fatherly uncle to the sons and daughters of his brother Thomas, who had died in 1768. Thomas Wentworth was two or three years younger than his more famous brother and is now remembered chiefly as the original occupant of the Wentworth-Gardner house which, according to Portsmouth tradition, was built for him by his generous father.¹ He married at an early age and was the father of five interesting children, two boys and three girls. Soon after Thomas's death his widow married Captain Bellew, a naval officer, whereupon the responsibility for bringing up and educating her children devolved largely upon the Governor. He assumed the burden with cheerfulness, in fact even with enthusiasm, and one of his reports concerning the progress of his nephews and nieces is worth repeating:

There are not in America three finer girls; Betsy is at an eminent boarding-school lately set up in Newburyport; the other two attend schools proper for their age. Mark is yet with Mr. Emerson at Hollis: he is grown a fine youth, and is soon to return to me to attend instructions in mathematics, French, fencing and dancing to qualify him for the navy which is his passion, and wherein, I dare say, he will make a good figure. I have kept him on a ship's books ever since you went home. John is under the care of Mr. Murray, where he makes in-

1. This building, considered a perfect type of Georgian architecture, has been purchased by the Metropolitan Museum. Probably its interior woodwork will be removed and preserved in its original arrangement in the American wing of the New York institution.

credible progress in learning. This genius was too good for a common college and required the attention of some extraordinary man.¹

Nephews and nieces are among this world's greatest blessings, but still greater happiness was in store for John Wentworth. On January 20, 1775, the booming of guns down the harbor announced to all Portsmouth that Mrs. Wentworth had given birth to a son. "Had a young prince been born there could not have been more rejoicing. All the gentlemen of the town and from the King's ships came, the next day, to pay their compliments. The ladies followed and, for one week, there were cake and caudle wine, etc., passing." So wrote the infant's jubilant grandmother soon after the great event.² A month or two later the babe was carried to Queen's Chapel and was there baptized in the presence of his admiring family. What the child was named, and why, is recorded in a letter from the Governor to Captain Holland, who had been a recent guest at Wentworth's unfinished country-seat at Wolfeborough.

Last week, we christianized our new born son, whom we present to you by the name of Charles-Mary, after Lord and Lady Rockingham at their request. The boy is well and hearty. He will do to pull up stumps at Wentworth House.

1. *John Wentworth to Henry Bellew*, April 8, 1775. The precocious John fulfilled the promise of his youthful genius by producing an elaborate legal work known as "Wentworth on Pleading." Long after the Revolution he returned to Portsmouth, married the daughter of Colonel Michael and Martha Hilton Wentworth, and resided for some time in the mansion at Little Harbor.

2. The letter is printed in full in *Wentworth Genealogy*, i, 317.

CHAPTER VII.

ENEMIES AND FRIENDS

IN the autumn of 1770 Benning Wentworth died at his mansion at Little Harbor. As no children survived him, the general assumption was that his nephew, the young Governor, would be his principal heir; and probably no one held this opinion more confidently than John Wentworth himself. It was no slight shock to the community, therefore, to learn that Uncle Benning had left a later will, which favored his fair widow, Martha Hilton Wentworth, and disappointed every one else, — except possibly Colonel Michael Wentworth, who married the bereaved lady two months after her husband's decease.¹ It will be remembered that Benning Wentworth had reserved to himself five hundred acres in each township granted by him, and thus had accumulated landed property amounting to over one hundred thousand acres. During his lifetime no one questioned his title to this territory, although some questioned the propriety of his method of acquiring it. Not long after his death, however, the Governor called the attention of the Council to the fact that his uncle, as an officer of the Crown, had granted these lands to himself, and he asked if such grants were legal. The members of the Council turned the matter over in their minds and replied in the negative, their opinion being sustained by a Boston lawyer named Fitch.² That

1. The sensation which Benning Wentworth's will created in Portsmouth is graphically described in a letter from John Hurd to Thomas Westbrook Waldron, dated October 15, 1770. This letter is preserved in the third volume of the "New Hampshire Manuscripts" in the Library of Congress.

2. *New Hampshire State Papers*, xviii, 624; John Adams's *Works*, ii, 283.

point being settled, Wentworth informed the Council that all his uncle's reservations, with two or three exceptions, had remained unimproved, and he asked if they would consent to his regranting "said tracts to such of his Majesty's subjects as should settle and cultivate the same." According to the minutes of the meeting, the advisory board agreed to the proposition, "Peter Livius, Esq., dissenting," — a modifying clause which was destined to occasion no small amount of trouble.

The dissenting member seems to have been an educated man with an unusual proclivity for misrepresentation. Born in England in 1727, he came to America about the year 1762 as the husband of Anna Elizabeth Mason, whose father had been a great landowner in New Hampshire. Livius was well-to-do to a degree which made him opulent in Portsmouth, and this fact, taken in connection with his wife's social position, persuaded Benning Wentworth that he would make an appropriate member of the Council, to which he was appointed in 1765. Still further evidence of the elder Wentworth's favor was shown when he created Livius a justice of the inferior Court of Common Pleas. In John Wentworth's esteem, however, he did not occupy so high a position. Soon after Wentworth became surveyor general, he discovered that Livius, without consulting him, had taken it upon himself to propose a new system of laws for the regulation of his Majesty's woods, whereupon the Governor observed, "Although Mr. Livius is a learned man, I perceive from his ideas of reformation that he is totally unacquainted with everything relative to the service," — which was probably not far from the truth.¹

Be that as it may, when Livius withheld his consent from the Governor's proposed resumption and distribution of Benning Wentworth's questionable grants, he declared his intention to place on file the reasons for his unique position. The Council

1. *John Wentworth to Durand and Bacon*, July 17, 1769.

made no objection, and a week later Livius handed in an amazing minority opinion, which took the form of a severe indictment of Governor John Wentworth and his Council. The document opened with the statement that the Governor wished to grant the lands in question to his own use through the medium of third parties, and that the Council, Livius excepted, "did accordingly consent." Then followed a series of misrepresentations which were intended to put the Governor and the majority of his advisers in the light of gross maladministrators of government. When the accusations were read in meeting, Wentworth asked the Council if they had changed their minds, or wished to make any reply to the dissentient, to which they rejoined with some heat that Livius had "so mutilated the questions and so prevaricated in rehearsing the Council's answer," that they recommended that a true copy of the journal of the previous meeting be written on the back of his "performance, called his dissent."¹ The protest was then placed on file, but not entered upon the journal, and there, as far as Governor and Council were concerned, the matter rested for the time being.

In the course of the year 1771 Livius endeavored to make political capital of his so-called grounds for dissent, and to create a party hostile to the Governor. With this end in view, he circulated copies of his mendacious document in channels where it might find credence, or at least sympathy, and ere long he discovered not a few malcontents. Benning Wentworth's widow, now Mrs. Michael Wentworth, naturally favored any movement which would prevent her losing title to the thousands of acres she had recently inherited. Then there were the Langdon brothers, Woodbury and his handsome brother John; they had no particular grievance against the Governor, but they had never quite understood why Wentworth and his aristocratic friends kept

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, xviii, 638-639.

them politically at arm's length.¹ In fact, if one went about it in the right way, he could discover in and about Portsmouth a number of people who had nothing to lose and perhaps something to gain by encouraging Peter Livius in his intrigue. Furthermore, although New Hampshire people as a whole still looked askance at the rebellious activities of the other colonies, political unrest was in the air, and it was not difficult to shake men's faith in the existing order of things.

It was not long before John Wentworth awoke to the situation and realized its dangers, both to himself and to the government. Two courses were open to him; he might try to buy off Livius — for he did not doubt that he had his price — or he might submit to a tiresome investigation. Under the prevailing conditions the former would have been the easier method, but the Governor deliberately chose the other course, assured that his own integrity and the good sense of his fellow-citizens would vindicate him and defeat his adversary.² In the meantime, Livius communicated his grievance to the Colonial Secretary in England, and in the summer of 1772 he crossed the ocean in order to make Wentworth's downfall a certainty.

Livius had not been in England many days before he lodged with the Board of Trade a formal complaint, accusing the Governor and Council of maladministration on seven specific counts as follows:

1. That Wentworth and his advisers, "without the intervention of a jury or any legal process," had dispossessed the grantees of many large tracts of land, and had granted them to other persons, on the mere suggestion that the original assignees had not fulfilled the conditions of their grant.

2. That since the year 1741 no account had been presented of that part of the provincial revenue commonly called "powder money";

1. *John Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham*, November 9, 1774.

2. Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Sixth Series, iv, 499.

and that when the Assembly had voted an inquiry in 1768, the Governor and his Council had killed the bill.

3. That soon after the decease of Benning Wentworth, the Governor asked the Council to consent to his granting to himself, but through other persons, all the tracts of land which his predecessor had reserved for his own use, the Governor alleging that such reservations made by his late uncle were void; that the Council gave its consent to this arrangement, and furthermore prevented Livius from recording his protesting dissent until "near twelve months after."

4. That in consequence of his opposition he had been "very injuriously treated, and at one time received much personal abuse from the Governor."

5. That Wentworth, "among other illegal and unworthy acts," had changed the judges "several times" in the Court of Common Pleas in order to obtain a favorable judgment upon a particular case in which he was interested.

6. That the Governor, in disobedience of his Majesty's instructions, had taken care not to send a copy of the journal of the Council to the home authorities, in order "better to keep out of sight the practices of himself and his Council."

7. That John Wentworth had filled the Council with his relatives, a fact which, in conjunction with the "extraordinary proceedings" already enumerated, indicated that there existed in the administration of New Hampshire "a connected and deep laid system of injustice."¹

This was Peter Livius's indictment, and it seemed not at all unlikely that it would convince the Board of Trade, for the complainant was on the spot whereas the defendant and his advisers were three thousand miles away.

The Board of Trade sent copies of Livius's memorial to Governor Wentworth and to his Council and awaited their replies before acting upon it. Naturally Wentworth gave the matter his immediate and vigorous attention. First he prepared his answer to the several articles of complaint, and collected depositions from representative citizens to support his statements, as directed by the Board of Trade. He likewise afforded the supporters of

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, xviii, 623-625.

Livius an opportunity to hand in affidavits sustaining their leader, although this offer did not prove to be productive of positive results. Before departing for England, Livius had entrusted Samuel Livermore, the attorney general of the province, with the care of his interests, and to him, therefore, the Governor delegated the matter of collecting testimony in favor of the troublemaker, suggesting that Woodbury Langdon "and the gentleman who married the late governor's widow" might be appropriate persons to interview. But after two months Livermore reported that those gentlemen "declared they had nothing to do with the affair," and in spite of all his efforts he had been unable to discover any citizens who were willing to make affidavits in support of Livius.¹ It should be added, however, that the complainant, acting for himself, succeeded in procuring two or three depositions which dwelt upon the difficulty of meeting the conditions imposed upon proprietors of new townships, exposed in detail the family relationship existing between the Governor and eight members of the Council, and testified to Livius's good character.²

In the meantime Wentworth completed the preparation of his defense, in which, point by point, he answered the seven charges made against him by his adversary. His reply was as follows:³

1. That an opinion of Sir Dudley Ryder and the Honorable William Murray (the Attorney General and Solicitor General of Great Britain) in 1752 declared the Crown might resume lands granted on conditions of settling within a stated time, if at the expiration of that period no settlement had been made. "That proper care was always taken to do strict justice to the first grantees, and that no land was regranted without full evidence that no settlement was made upon it pursuant to the conditions of the grant." And finally that a clause in the charters, reserving to the Crown a right to regrant the land im-

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, xviii, 616.

2. *Acts of the Privy Council (Colonial Series)*, vi, 535.

3. Wentworth's defense is summarized in the *Acts of the Privy Council (Colonial Series)*, vi, 532-533.

mediately if the terms were not met by the proprietors, indicated that the intervention of a jury was not considered necessary in such cases.

2. That the powder money had been regularly collected, and that the question of an inquiry regarding its disposition did not concern the Governor, but merely the Council and the Assembly.

3. That the unexpected change in Benning Wentworth's will had not in any degree influenced the Governor in the matter of regranteeing the land in question; and that he had no private interest in any of the tracts, which were now regranted to persons who would cultivate them.

4. That, in spite of provocation, he had never subjected Livius to any personal abuse, but that he had not reappointed him to the judge's office because of his partiality and malpractices while a justice of the Court of Common Pleas, and because his finances were in a disordered state.

5. That the judges had been changed in a case in which he was interested, not in order to insure a favorable verdict, but in accordance with the custom of the provincial judiciary which prevented any judge from sitting upon a case in which he had been of counsel to either party.

6. That the secretary of the province had failed to inform him that the records of the Council, when sitting as an executive body, should be transmitted to England; that they had, nevertheless, been properly kept and were at all times open to those who wished to examine them.

7. That he had only one blood relative who ever attended meetings of the Council, and that he had never recommended that any such be appointed to that body.¹

1. This statement was accurate, although the ties of kinship between Governor and Council were astounding. One should bear in mind, however, that Wentworth merely inherited the "family government" established by his predecessor. In 1771 the list read as follows:

Theodore Atkinson, the Governor's uncle by marriage.

Daniel Warner, the father of Jonathan Warner; *see below*.

Mark Hunking Wentworth, the Governor's father.

Peter Livius.

Jonathan Warner, the Governor's cousin by marriage.

Daniel Rindge, the Governor's uncle.

Daniel Peirce, the Governor's uncle by marriage.

George Jaffrey, the son of George Jaffrey, whose second wife was the Governor's aunt.

Daniel Rogers, the Governor's uncle by marriage.

In a separate document seven members of the Council refuted Livius's charges against them, and incidentally sustained Wentworth's administration throughout. The two sets of papers were fortified by a sheaf of affidavits made by a number of New Hampshire men who were glad to rally to the aid of their governor. Besides these depositions there were general letters of commendation from the leading members of the clergy, — Doctor Samuel Langdon, Doctor Haven, Jeremy Belknap, and others of their stamp.¹ Towards the end of December, 1772, the pile of evidence was practically complete and Wentworth entrusted it to his private secretary, Thomas Macdonogh,² who sailed immediately for England. Arriving at London in the latter part of January, Macdonogh got in touch with Wentworth's former colleague, Barlow Trecothick, who was still agent for the province of New Hampshire. Trecothick was well known in political circles and through him the Governor's secretary gained access to Lord Dartmouth, who had now succeeded Hillsborough in the office of Colonial Secretary. He then delivered the precious papers to the secretary of the Board of Trade and awaited developments.

The Lords of Trade acquainted Livius with the contents of Wentworth's communications, and in March received from him a rebuttal, accompanied by a few depositions in his own behalf. Then the Board endeavored to come to a decision in the case. Wentworth had little to fear, and yet it was essential that the verdict should be in his favor, for although their Lordships had no executive power, their recommendations to the Privy Council were accepted verbatim by the latter body in at least nine cases out of ten. The King and Council had no time to bother with details, and they trusted to the overworked brains of the advisory

1. New Hampshire Historical Society's *Collections*, ix, 305-363.

2. After the Revolution Macdonogh was British consul at Boston, where he died in 1805. He is buried in Milton, Massachusetts.

board to keep them on the right track. Had Macdonogh and Wentworth's lawyers had a free hand, probably all would have gone well, but for some unaccountable reason Trecothick insisted that they should not use the "cloud of authentic testimonies" which vouched for the Governor's character. This blunder left Wentworth's reputation at the mercy of his enemy, of course, and, if taken advantage of, could not fail to prejudice the Board against him.¹ On the tenth day of May, 1773, the Lords of Trade met and sat in judgment upon the case. To the amazement of all concerned, they decided that John Wentworth was guilty of four of the offenses of which he was accused; and since this was so, they questioned "whether Mr. Wentworth's conduct in the mal-administration with which he has been charged has been such as renders him a fit person to be entrusted with your Majesty's interests in the important station he now holds."² In other words, the Board practically recommended that John Wentworth be dismissed from the office of governor of New Hampshire; and there was only one chance in ten that the Privy Council would not put that recommendation into execution.

The joy of Peter Livius was equaled only by the indignation of Wentworth's friends in England. Something must be done, and it must be done quickly. Macdonogh naturally turned to the Marquis of Rockingham. His Lordship was in a difficult position. As a friend of Wentworth he wished to do all in his power to support the Governor; on the other hand, the political situation in England was such that he might do more harm than good by becoming his champion. All things considered, it seemed wiser for him to remain in the background, and to leave active participation in the affair to his kinsman, Sir Thomas Wentworth, assisted by Paul Wentworth and Thomas Macdonogh. Sir Thomas was

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 344.

2. *Ibid.*, 337-339.

a very rich baronet who resided at Bretton Hall in Yorkshire. He and John Wentworth had formed a friendship during the latter's visit to England, an attachment which prompted the Governor to send an occasional present to Bretton Hall after his return to New Hampshire. Once the gift was "a baboon and two squirrels"; at another time it was "a large Newfoundland water-dog"; and upon yet another occasion he sent his congenial kinsman "a hamper of Madeira wine, a bundle of fish and forty trees" from America.¹ It was now time for the Baronet to return the courtesy. Paul Wentworth was another friend worth having; yet just who he was, or whence he came, is difficult to say. All we know is that several years earlier he had turned up at Boston, with letters of introduction to Samuel Wentworth of that town and to Mark Hunking Wentworth of Portsmouth. He came from the West Indies, was intelligent and apparently well-educated, but upon precisely what basis the Wentworth brothers accepted him as their relative does not appear. Upon his wife's death he found himself a "gentleman of large property" and decided to see what his money could do for him in London. He moved thither and became a resident of the metropolis. According to the Governor, Paul was his "near relation, and most intimate, dearest, and confidential friend," a statement which is amply confirmed by their correspondence. In 1773 Paul Wentworth was in London, and he did not hesitate to come to the rescue at this crisis in his friend's career.

Wentworth's supporters were reasonably confident that if the Privy Council would institute an independent investigation, regardless of the Board's decision, his case would end in an honorable acquittal. With this in view, therefore, Sir Thomas, Paul,

1. In February, 1772, Wentworth made Sir Thomas one of the proprietors of a new township in the heart of the White Mountains, which he appropriately named Bretton Woods.

and Macdonogh petitioned the King to make a special inquiry before acting in the matter. To their intense relief this prayer was answered in the affirmative, and on June thirtieth the case was referred to the Privy Council Committee for Plantation Affairs for fresh consideration.

In the meantime Livius and his friends considered the Board of Trade recommendation as the forerunner of certain victory. The document was printed in pamphlet form and copies were immediately sent to America, where its receipt caused no little excitement. Wentworth had received the information in advance, and, with it, assurance from his friends in England that the Privy Council would reject the Board's recommendation. This was encouraging, but the Governor kept these hopeful tidings to himself in order to discover who were his friends and who were his enemies in the darkest hour. The results of his innocent plot are told by Wentworth himself in the following words.

It succeeded. Many have most unexpectedly declared both for and against me. The torrents of obloquy overflow'd, even to abuse of my servants and oblique insults to Mrs. W., who, with that resolution becoming her rank and name, was affected toward them with pity and contempt.¹

In another part of the same letter one discerns the Governor's oscillations between gloom and confidence.

Yet the event of war is precarious, and therefore I wish to see an end of this affair, from whence issue such deluges of small spite and envious malignity; which, like the buzz of muskitoes, disturb our repose, tho' they can't destroy our health. The variety of rumors spread upon the late pamphlet's arrival have now pretty tho'ro'ly militated each other into silence. In a few days they'l be still more ridiculous.

1. Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Sixth Series, iv, 45.

On July 22, and again on July 29, 1773, the Committee for Plantation Affairs listened to the arguments on each side of the Livius-Wentworth case, which had been "a cause of much public expectation for more than eighteen months." If the newspapers of the day are to be believed, "the hearing was attended by a respectable and crowded audience; among them many of the principal gentry from all the American provinces and from the West India Islands were present."¹ Another month dragged by before the Committee made its report, and then six weeks more ere the world learned its verdict:

That there is no foundation for any censure upon the said John Wentworth, Esq., your Majesty's governor of New Hampshire, for any of the charges contained in Mr. Livius's complaint against him; whose general conduct, in the administration of affairs within your Majesty's government of New Hampshire is represented to have tended greatly to the peace and prosperity of the said province.

It is needless to add that the King in Council approved the committee report, and thereby put an end to "the said complaint of the said Peter Livius."

About the middle of December the good news reached Portsmouth. The joy of the province was considerably diminished, however, by a simultaneous rumor that the Crown had appointed Livius chief justice, in which capacity he would soon return to New England. The story had more foundation than most of its kind, for we know that the ever well-meaning Lord Dartmouth, with a mistaken idea that he could reconcile the two men, actually elevated the complainant to this office.² Happily for John

1. *New Hampshire Gazette*, September 24, 1773.

2. P. O. Hutchinson's *Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson*, i, 187.

The warrant authorizing Wentworth to make this appointment is signed by Dartmouth and is dated January 14, 1774. There is a copy of it in the "British Transcripts" in the Library of Congress. LC 295: P.R.O. C.O. 324, 53, p. 20.

Wentworth and for New Hampshire, however, he was prevailed upon to retract this false step. Instead, Livius was placed at the head of the judiciary in the province of Quebec, where he soon got into a dispute with the governor, Sir Guy Carleton, which was singularly reminiscent of his behavior in New Hampshire.¹

The citizens of Portsmouth celebrated the vindication of their governor by giving a splendid ball in his honor. This must have rejoiced the heart of Mrs. Wentworth, who was never happier nor more at home than in a ball-room; but her husband probably found deeper satisfaction in an unexpected address of congratulation from the citizens of a town in the Merrimac Valley. As a genuine and spontaneous tribute to the last royal governor of New Hampshire, it deserves reproduction in these pages.

The inhabitants of the town of Londonderry beg leave to approach your Excellency, and express their sentiments of gratitude and affection to your Excellency's person and administration. We esteem it a peculiar mark of the favour of his gracious Majesty that he has appointed to the supreme command here a gentleman whose birth and education have been in the province over which he presides. From the circumstances and your Excellency's known character, we early conceived the most sanguine hopes from your administration. Nor have we been disappointed. The unabated attention you have given to the interests of the province has not only been felt by the people of your charge, but has been observed (we had almost said envied) by our neighbours who are without the limits of your jurisdiction. The cultivation of land within the government, and the extension of settlements even to regions that were scarce known when your Excellency came to the chair, must be attributed in a great measure to your care and the benignity of your government. But it has not been in this view alone that you have been the patron of this people. To extend settlements or to cultivate lands while the people that settle and cultivate are without the means of knowledge, might be rather injurious than beneficial. But these have not escaped your Excellency's attention. The institution of a college in the wilderness, and the liberal

1. *Acts of the Privy Council (Colonial Series)*, v, 464-471.

encouragement it has received from your hand is abundant evidence of this attention.

We cannot help mentioning as a peculiar happiness of the people under your Excellency's charge, that your ears have always been open to their voice. The easy access they have gained and the polite reception they have met with from you, has afforded them the means of communicating, and your Excellency of receiving, all necessary information of their wishes and their wants.

We have been excited to make this address to your Excellency as a testimonial of our sense of your benign administration, and as an evidence of our opinion of any suggestions that may have been made to the prejudice of your Excellency in these respects, and to assure you of our loyalty to the King, and of our affection to your person.

CHAPTER VIII.

WOLFEBOROUGH

ONE of John Wentworth's youthful dreams had been to possess a country estate in the upland regions of his native province. While still in his teens he weighed the relative merits of various districts, and thought seriously of establishing himself in the lower Cohoss, which had recently been rediscovered and was considered a paragon of fertility by our ancestors. Sometimes that promising part of the Connecticut Valley seemed a bit remote even to one who loved adventure, especially while the French and Indian War was in progress, "but," Wentworth wrote to a friend in Boston, "I determine to go into the country, and perhaps there."¹ A few years later he wrote in the same strain, "A country life ever had many charms for me,"² but the long war and his subsequent visit to England deferred the realization of his dream. Probably his thoughts turned toward the Cohoss because his Uncle Benning had made him a proprietor in two or three towns in that region.

A little later, as we have seen, he became one of the grantees of the township of Wolfeborough, which, as a place of residence, had two advantages over Dorchester or Lyme; it was more accessible, being but fifty miles northwest of Portsmouth, and it bordered upon a large and beautiful lake, which Wentworth and his friends referred to as Winnepesiockett Pond. As a commercial proposition

1. "Dering Manuscripts," i, 14. These interesting papers are in the possession of Miss Cornelia Horsford, of Sylvester Manor, Shelter Island, New York, who kindly granted the author the privilege of examining them.

2. *Ibid.*, i, 77.

Wolfeborough did not develop as rapidly as the proprietors could have wished, although the committee consisting of Dr. Cutter, Paul March, and John Wentworth did its utmost to persuade possible settlers to see the advantages of their township. Therefore, while Wentworth was in England, a new scheme was tried. The proprietors divided their territory into a number of tracts of various dimensions but of supposedly equal value. Then they drew lots, in more senses than one, and thereafter each man assumed responsibility for the development of his own domain. Wentworth drew Lot No. 7, which was situated near the eastern corner of the township and comprised about six hundred and fifty acres. It so happened that this was about the most forbidding piece of land of them all — a rectangle containing nothing but steep hills and rocky woodlands — and might well have ended its owner's enthusiasm for Wolfeborough or even his determination to reside in the country.¹ More fortunate was his brother Thomas who was allotted a triangular tract of comparatively level ground on the southeastern shore of a small lake called Smith's Pond.²

The Governor's land commanded a superb view, to be sure, but man cannot live by view alone, and therefore the owner, undaunted by his bad luck, began negotiations for a more favorable location. Looking southwestward from the arid ridge which ran across his allotted holding, his eye rested first upon the shining waters of Smith's Pond, then upon the much greater surface of Winnepesaukee, broken by the intervening hills into strips of silver, and finally upon the reassuring outline of the mountains of

1. The lot included a large part of Cotton Mountain, then known as Cutter's Hill. See Parker's *History of Wolfeborough*, p. 22, and the map in *New Hampshire State Papers*, xxviii, 472. Wentworth's further acquisitions are shown on a plan in the latter work, xxviii, 479.

2. Point Breeze and a part of Pleasant Valley. Smith's Pond is now called Lake Wentworth.

central New Hampshire. How could he possess that splendid outlook and yet reside upon a reasonably arable plantation? The hither shore of Smith's Pond offered the most favorable solution of the problem. Wentworth had little difficulty in buying from fellow-proprietors all the land bordering the northern side of the smaller lake, and soon found himself in possession of about four thousand acres well suited to his needs, in addition to some land which he regarded purely as an investment.¹ The entire transaction cost him less than seven hundred and fifty guineas.

When the spring of 1768 came slowly northward, Wentworth's "designations in the wilderness," as he termed them, began to assume concrete form. The Governor sent Benjamin Hart and William Webb "on their first expedition, to clear a few acres and build an humble habitation at Wolfboro " for him. Hart was to be the overseer of the plantation, and Webb was "to reside there as farmer in future." ² It was a very unpretentious beginning, but Wentworth's lively imagination gave him a picture of Wolfborough as he intended it should be ten years hence, when his mansion, Wentworth House, would be the center of a happy, vigorous community composed of the "people of all nations." A post road connecting Portsmouth and Canada would pass through the township and thus insure it against isolation. This was important, for Wolfborough was to be not merely the summer residence of the Governor; he intended to live there the greater part of the year "if not the whole," making visits to Portsmouth only when affairs of state demanded his presence at the capital.³ Such was Wentworth's dream in 1768, and only his intense love of a fair lady, who never learned "to prefer a grove to a ball-room," could bring him to abandon it without a mur-

1. *John Wentworth to Joseph Harrison*, September 24, 1769.

2. *New Hampshire Historical Society's Collections*, iii, 283-284.

3. *John Wentworth to Joseph Trumbull*, September 24, 1769.

mur. In 1768 he was still a bachelor and made his plans accordingly.

For the site of Wentworth House the Governor chose a small wooded plain about a quarter of a mile northeast of Smith's Pond. Soon the trees were felled on about one hundred acres, and a little more than one-half of that area was cleared. Then in the midst of the stumps and brush arose the frame of a substantial mansion, one hundred and four feet long and forty-two feet wide, "built of the best, and by the best workmen in that country." In May, 1769, the house was habitable, although far from finished. As years went on, however, it developed into one of the finest houses in New England, containing among other features a "great dancing-room" forty feet long. Other buildings and appurtenances soon appeared, which Wentworth described as follows: "One stable and coach house, 62 feet long, 40 feet wide and 24 post. One other stable of same dimensions. One barn, 106 feet by 40, and 17 or 18 feet post. One large dairy with a well. Chimney, smoke and ashes house, etc., etc. One blacksmith's shop. Joiner and cabinet-maker's do. under the same roof. One garden, walled with stone on three sides (the front secur'd by an arm of the lake), contained about 40 acres. A park of 600 acres, substantially enclosed with large lengths of trees. In the park, one saw-mill and one grist-mill. . . . On this estate was every implement of husbandry and for the shops attached to and built thereon; and various boats and gondola for conveyance and transportation of goods, produce, and cattle."¹ This was Wentworth House and its immediate accessories as the Governor knew

1. This description is quoted from a statement which Wentworth filed with the Commission of Enquiry into the Losses and Services of the American Loyalists. Many of the manuscript books and papers of the commissioners have been transcribed for the New York Public Library. Copies of those relating to New Hampshire Loyalists have been made for the State of New Hampshire also, and are preserved in the State Library at Concord.



them in the early seventeen seventies. He valued the whole establishment at £20,000 and, although gentlemen farmers should never count the cost of their happiness, Wentworth estimated that he had spent much more than that sum upon his great adventure.¹

In later years, when Wentworth House and Wolfborough had become heartbreaking memories, the Governor claimed that in 1774 the farm contained "more than 500 acres under high cultivation" and that its produce exceeded the consumption of his whole family. The former statement seems incredible and is not sustained by the cleared area marked upon the Holland Map, which should be a good authority for the condition of Wolfborough and its environs in those days. On the other hand, contemporary observers never failed to express amazement at the success and extent of Wentworth's agricultural ambitions, and it is barely possible that five hundred acres were cleared between 1768 and 1775.²

1. *Winslow Papers*, p. 326.

2. The fame of the plantation spread beyond the limits of the province and survived the Revolution. For instance, *Beacon Hill, a Local Poem, Historic and Descriptive*, by Mrs. Sarah Morton, which was published at Boston in 1797, commemorated the Governor and his Wolfborough activities in these lines:

"While Wentworth, patron of his parent clime,
 With hand of bounty, and with soul sublime,
 Mid the blank forest arch'd the sumptuous dome,
 And dress'd the desert with exotic bloom.
 The blue cot rising on the rivulet's side,
 The hungry plain with feeding pulse supplied,
 The clover'd valley, and the barley'd hill,
 The busy flail, the never-resting mill,
 Join'd with the milk-maid's song the ploughman's glee,
 Were all thy gift, and drew their hope from thee; —
 Thee WENTWORTH! born the humblest hut to cheer,
 From vexing Want to chase the gathering tear,
 Or, round thy brow while civic myrtles twine,
 To rule in council, and in courts to shine."

The days at Wolfeborough were never long enough for John Wentworth. "You would find me," he wrote to a friend, "very assiduously attending Mr. Cushman's practical lectures on agriculture, — cutting down a tree here, and planting another there, clearing, building, and plowing with equal avidity as I passed through the splendid scenes of Europe; and, I think, with much keener relish for having gone through them."¹ This was paradise to the Governor, but the joys of rough country life were more appreciated by him than by his lady. Mrs. Wentworth strove valiantly to adapt herself to the kind of existence which gave her husband unequaled joy, but with what degree of success may be ascertained from one of her letters, written at Wentworth House in October, 1770, and addressed to her friend Mrs. Woodbury Langdon, of Portsmouth.²

MY DEAR MRS. LANGDON:

I hope there requires no profusion of words to convince my dear friend how very happy her obliging letter made me, as surely she must be sensible of the kindest feelings of my heart towards her, and believe me, my dear Mrs. Langdon, I was extremely uneasy till I heard you got safe to Portsmouth. Mrs. Loring told me you had met with some inconvenience at the Ferry, which really alarmed me exceedingly for you. However, I was soon quieted by receiving a line from you with mention of your health. The time you kindly spent with me in this solitary wilderness has riveted a lasting impression of pleasure upon my mind; nor do I forget our tedious walks which the charms of the meadow hardly made up for. I have taken but one since, and then lost both my shoes and came home barefoot.

Mrs. Livius arrived here on Monday afternoon and appeared nearly as tired as you was, but would not own it.

She staid here three nights for fair weather, and at last went over the pond in a high gust of wind, which made a great sea and white caps as large as the canoe.

1. *John Wentworth to Joseph Trumbull*, September 24, 1769.

2. First printed in the *Granite Monthly*, v, 97-99.

I was much afraid for her, but she got over quite safe. She told me you was unwell when she left town, and I am anxious to hear you are recovered again. I wish you had tarried at Wolfborough till you had established your health. Indeed, you ought to be very attentive to keep your mind easy and calm, or you will be often subject to indispositions that will become mighty troublesome to you. I was pleased at all the intelligence you gave me; for, although I live in the woods, I am fond of knowing what passes in the world. Nor have my ideas sunk half enough in rural tranquillity to prefer a grove to a ball-room. I wish you were here to take a game of billiards with me, as I am alone. The Governor is so busy in directions to his workmen that I am almost turned hermit.

The great dancing-room is nearly completed, with the drawing-room, and begins to make a very pretty appearance. I hope you will be here next summer with all my heart, and then our house will be more in order than it was when you favored me with a visit, and less noise. For in fact my head is most turned with the variety of noises that is everywhere about me, and I am hardly fit to bear it, as I have been in poor health ever since you left me, and am hardly able to live. However, I hope to be stout now the winter comes on, as the summer never agrees with my constitution, which looks strong, but is quite slender. When Mrs. Loring left me, I gave her in charge your side-saddle, which she promised me to send home to you. I hope it was not forgot. If it was, it must have been left at Stavers' tavern, and you can send there for it, if you have not received it before this time.

The cruel is come safe, and I will trouble you for the worsted you mentioned, as it will do just as well as English; and, if you please, one skein more of cruel, as we were much in want of it.

I have done very little work since you went away; not because I was indolently disposed, but because you did so much in helping me that I have nothing to do. So now I read or play as I have a mind to do. I get but very little of my Governor's company. He loves to be going about, and sometimes (except at meales) I don't see him an hour in a day. The season of the year advances so rapidly now that we begin to think of winter quarters, and I believe we shall soon get to town. I guess we shall set off about the time we proposed. You may easily think I dread the journey, as the roads are so bad, and I as great a coward as ever existed. I tell the Governor he is unlucky in a wife having so timid a disposition, and he so resolute. For you know he would attempt, and effect if possible, to ride over the tops of the trees

on Moose Mountain, while poor I even tremble at passing through a road cut at the foot of it.

Your little dog grows finely and I shall bring him down with me. You never saw such a parcel of animals in your life, and they have lessened poor Phyllis' courage down to a standard, for she can hardly crawl along. But I intend to send some of them off soon. We have given Mr. Livius one, and our neighbors all around are begging to have one, so that the stock will soon be lessened, and I intend to see yours is the best taken care of amongst them. Mrs. Rindge seems now to falter in her intentions to spend the winter in town, but she says she is fixed on passing a month or so there. I believe it all a matter of uncertainty; for the roads are so precarious in the winter months, that 'tis impossible to fix on anything. Her baby seems to grow considerably and looks better than it did, so that I begin to think now she has a chance for its life. You know it looked in a great decline at the time you was with me. I am obliged for your charge to the house you lodged at on the road to be in readiness for us at our return. I desire things only a little clean; for elegance is not to be found in the country. I hope Mr. Langdon and your little ones are in health. I pray you'll present my best compliments to him and tell him I hope the roads will be better next year to induce him to try another journey to Wolfborough. The Governor has just come in and says I must send a great many compliments to you and Mr. Langdon, and tell you he knows you'll forget how to eat beef at Portsmouth. Wolfborough is the place to recover appetites and learn people to relish anything that is set before them. But adieu. I could write you all day, but I am called on for my letter by Mr. Russel who is just setting off for his journey. This relieves you from the trouble of reading a long penned epistle from one who need not say she loves you; since you know you can command every friendship that flows from the affectionate heart and mind of

Your sincere friend and very humble servant,

FRANCES WENTWORTH

There were indeed many things to interest the Governor at Wolfborough. Besides planting fruit trees among the pine stumps, he tried to introduce new birds into the forests and new

fish into the lake. Several pairs of pheasant were brought from England and let fly in the New Hampshire woods, in the hope that they would thrive and provide interesting shooting for the guests at Wentworth House. But nothing more was seen of the unfortunate birds, who probably became the victims of beasts they had never dreamed of in old England.¹ More encouraging were the experiments with fish. Much to the amusement of his friends, Wentworth took out of the ocean some cusk, a superior kind of cod, and released them in Smith's Pond, where, according to all predictions, they should have speedily died. On the contrary, they lived and multiplied, and became denizens of Lake Winnepesaukee as well.² These were but two manifestations of John Wentworth's eager interest in natural history. When one of his deputy surveyors was about to depart for Canada, the Governor charged him, "If any curiosities, natural or artificial, should come in your way remember that I am still disposed to exchange good gold for almost anything that may employ my mind to discover, or my time to improve the use or improvement of, from the humblest pebble to the [most] wonderful animal."³ It was a combination of this scientific inquisitiveness and his innate love of adventure that led Wentworth to explore part of the White Hills in the summer of 1772.⁴ A more serious expedition was planned for the following year, when the Governor and a company including his youthful admirer, Benjamin Thompson, hoped to spend a couple of weeks exploring and surveying the region of the big peaks. Apparently public business required the abandonment of this plan, but Wentworth's immediate accept-

1. Belknap's *History of New Hampshire*, iii, 171.

2. Nathan Hale's *Notes made during an Excursion to the Highlands of New Hampshire*, p. 36.

3. *John Wentworth to Joshua Loring, Jr.*, July 10, 1767.

4. Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Sixth Series, iv, 64-65.

ance of Thompson's invitation indicated his constant eagerness to combine science and adventure.¹

The building of Wentworth House and the cultivation of the great farm naturally encouraged people of all classes to settle in or near Wolfeborough. In 1766 there were no permanent residents whatever in the township; in 1769 the Governor estimated its population to be about one hundred and fifty; and the census of 1775 credited it with more than two hundred inhabitants. Wentworth had great faith in the economic possibilities of frontier towns, not only for the proprietor but for the settler as well. "A man that has £100 and can labor," he wrote, "in three years will be very easy and independent; but if from one to two thousand pounds,—in five years he may live nobly and increase his estate into four times the value." It gladdened his heart, therefore, to see log cabins appear in the surrounding wilderness, and whenever he discovered the right kind of immigrant he did not hesitate to give him a bit of land in Wolfeborough.² On the other hand, the Portsmouth aristocracy began to appreciate inland New Hampshire as a place of summer residence. Jotham Rindge, the Governor's uncle, established himself and his family about a mile and a quarter north of Wentworth House. Another neighbor was Peter Livius, Esq., whose house in Tuftonborough was not more than five miles distant; and still farther toward the northwest Samuel Livermore, the attorney general, was preparing to build at Holderness a mansion consistent with the dignity of his office.

This development of the Winnepesaukee region was due not only to the prestige which the Governor's country seat lent to Wolfeborough, but also to the improvement of the road between

1. George E. Ellis's *Memoir of Sir Benjamin Thompson*, pp. 48-49. Thompson later became Count Rumford, the famous physicist.

2. Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Sixth Series, iv, 58.

that town and the more settled part of the province. Wentworth was ever an advocate of good roads and he wished, naturally enough, that the way from Portsmouth to his farm should set a good example to the rest of New Hampshire. In summer and autumn it was reasonably smooth as far as Middleton, a township which then included Brookfield and bounded Wolfeborough on the southeast. But through Middleton progress was difficult; and, to make matters worse, those journeying from the capital to Wentworth House and beyond encountered its hardships when weary from forty miles of traveling. The proprietors of the delinquent township frequently promised to cut and clear a highway through their domain, but nothing was done. They found it more agreeable to watch their land increase in value through the development of the surrounding towns than to expend their money in its improvement and cultivation. Meanwhile the proprietors and settlers in Wolfeborough, Tuftonborough, and Moultonborough suffered, and wondered why the Middleton grant was not declared void because of its unfulfilled conditions. This discouraging state of affairs would have continued indefinitely had not Governor Wentworth determined to take vigorous and immediate steps to correct it. On May 13, 1769, he addressed the following letter to the leading proprietor of Middleton:

WENTWORTH HOUSE, WOLFBO RO

SIR:

Having so frequently applied to those who had a grant of the township of Middleton (now forfeited for at least ten years' neglect of settlement) for a road to be made through said town, which they have scandalously neglected to this day, much to their own loss — to the injury of all this part of the country — to my particular detriment already of 300 dollars — and twice very nearly to my being drowned — also to the dishonor of the province in having such an impassible tract in the center of the government — to the distress of very many good subjects, merely to gratify the sordid indolence and retrograde advance of a few unjust people — I therefore desire you'll notify them

directly, that I am determined no longer to suffer those grievances, and that on thursday morning, 18th May, 1769, I shall send my overseer with twenty able men and eight oxen to cutt, bridge, and make the said road effectually—each man @ 3/6 pence per diem wages, oxen 3/6 per diem yoke — and that I will petition to the proprietors of the patent for all the land unsettled in said town, to be sold at public auction within four weeks of this day to repay the expence,—provided, nevertheless, that if any body of men, at least twelve, and a team of at least six good oxen actually come to work and continue thereupon untill the road is effectually and wholly finished, made, and completed, by or before Wednesday noon, the 17th *inst.*, that then, and only then, I shall desist. And further, I would inform you that whatever deficiency may appear in said road I will directly make good, and obtain a sale of the town; for it shall no longer remain an insult to every industrious man in this country. It will not avail for you to represent that it is a busy time, or any other difficulties. The work ought to have been done more than seven years since, and I do assure you upon my word and honor, that I will not relinquish one single atom of what I have wrote,— and am already promised safety enough for me that the lands shall repay me.

I am your most humble servant,

JOHN WENTWORTH

When, in spite of this ultimatum, the Middleton proprietors still failed to act, the Governor did not hesitate to carry out his threat. In the summer of 1769 about seventy-five men under the direction of Benjamin Hart and John Drew constructed a road which was a credit to their energy and skill. These men built not for a year or a decade but for posterity, and their labor, if not their memory, is preserved in one of the main thoroughfares of Middleton and Brookfield. Upon its completion Wentworth, true to his warning, sent the bill to the delinquent proprietors, and thenceforth rode from Portsmouth to Wentworth House in safety and comparative comfort.¹

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, xxvii, 499–510. By comparing an enlargement of the Holland Map with a modern road map one can discover the course of the road through Middleton. At Middleton meeting-house it turned

There is one aspect of the Wolfeborough plantation which the writer hesitates to discuss. Sharing Wentworth's love for the lake region of New Hampshire and likewise his joy in country life, he finds sordid and uncongenial the question of finances; and yet it is of real significance. Once the Governor wrote to a friend, "The remarkable plenty and cheapness of living make a [New Hampshire] man of £200 per annum equal to a nobleman in Europe,"¹ — and a great deal happier no doubt, but Wentworth's manner of living must have required an amount much nearer £2000. His salary as governor was £700 and the rent of his residence in Portsmouth. As surveyor general of his Majesty's woods he received £400. His independent income appears to have been almost nothing. Perhaps, then, his revenue from all sources may have totaled £1200. Could this have been sufficient to meet the expenses of the Portsmouth establishment with its sixteen horses and eight servants, and also Wentworth House? The answer must be in the negative.

The explanation, however, is not difficult. The Governor's father, Mark Hunking Wentworth, advanced funds with a lavish hand, probably with the expectation of being reimbursed when John should inherit Benning Wentworth's property. At all events, he lent him between thirteen and fourteen thousand pounds, most of which was probably expended at Wolfeborough.

northeastward in order to avoid the range of mountains of which Copple-crown is the highest, skirted the eastern foot-hills, and recovered its original direction before reaching what is now Brookfield Corner. From that point the east road to Wolfeborough and the so-called Cottle road, which branches from it on the right about two miles from the Corner, are probably identical with the highway constructed in 1769. From the town line dividing Middleton (Brookfield) from Wolfeborough the Governor was responsible for his own road, which circled the northern slope of Martin's Hill and then entered his clearing as a formal drive.

1. *John Wentworth to H. T. Cramahé*, April 5, 1768.

Other obligations increased the Governor's indebtedness to more than eighteen thousand pounds. But these liabilities do not necessarily indicate that the Governor was either a spendthrift or a poor business man. Although Wentworth House and its appurtenances required an outlay of more than £20,000, we should remember that it was an investment as well as a luxury. In those days the rich and the well-to-do who wished to increase their wealth did not invest in stocks and bonds, but in lands in the interior. In the Wolfeborough enterprise Wentworth was both investor and promoter. Wentworth House may have been an extravagance, but it focused the attention of rich and poor upon the township of Wolfeborough, tempted the speculator, and attracted the settler. As soon as real estate began to boom, the sale of his odd lots alone would pay for the great farm and mansion-house on the shore of Smith's Pond. So reckoned John Wentworth in 1768, and nothing less than a revolution could have prevented the happy realization of his expectations.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHURCH AND THE COLLEGE

UNLIKE Plymouth and Boston the first settlement on the banks of the Piscataqua was not a protest against the government or the ritual of the Church of England. On the contrary, it was a purely commercial enterprise undertaken chiefly by Captain John Mason, a man of energy and imagination, who had abundant confidence in the financial possibilities of the New World. In the autumn of 1629 Mason was granted the tract of land lying between the Merrimac and the Piscataqua rivers. This he named New Hampshire in honor of the county in England in which he had resided for a number of years. Then came news that New France had fallen into the hands of the English, and that Champlain was a prisoner in London. This event seemed to open new possibilities for making money, for the Canadian fur trade would be taken away from the French and its great profits would be enjoyed by whatever Englishmen were so fortunate as to share in the spoils. Mason and his friend Sir Ferdinando Gorges were among the first to get the ear of the distributing agency, and soon found themselves the grantees of an indefinite inland area, lying west and northwest of New Hampshire and including Lake Champlain. Laconia was the euphonious name given to this latest province; and in order to exploit its resources Mason and Gorges organized the Laconia Company.

Since Captain Mason's original grant on the Piscataqua seemed to offer an excellent base from which the company might operate, men and supplies were sent thither to establish one or two plantations. Most of the colonists were employed in clearing the land,

working the saw-mills, and extracting salt from sea-water to be used in the fishing industry. A few expeditions were made into the wilderness in the hope of discovering water communication from Laconia to the Piscataqua, but unfortunately the rivers of the land of furs flowed northward or southward and left the New Hampshire settlement of little or no use as a working base or entrepôt in this trade. The investors' visions of wealth faded, but their colonists remained in and about Portsmouth and received occasional reënforcements from Captain Mason, whose interest in the community continued until he died in 1635. These settlers had had no quarrel with the bishops; neither had they taken exception to the form of worship to which they were accustomed in England. Their coming to America indicated merely their belief that the New World might afford them more prosperity than they could hope for in the Old. Therefore, when one Richard Gibson, a young Episcopal minister, appeared in their midst they gladly accepted him as their parson and under his guidance worshiped together according to the ritual of the Church of England.

All went well until New Hampshire was taken under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts in 1641. Then the vigilant eye of Puritanism lighted upon the Piscataqua settlement, and kindled with wrath at the discovery of a minister "wholly addicted to the hierarchy and discipline of England."¹ Gibson was summoned to Boston forthwith, and was there tried by the General Court. With the examples of Roger Williams, and Anne Hutchinson fresh in his memory the New Hampshire parson knew enough not to assume the offensive against the rulers of Massachusetts. He made a mild defense and then threw himself upon the mercy of the court. With unusual leniency the magistrates decided to allow him to depart "without any fine or other punishment," it being understood that he would leave the country within a few

1. John Winthrop's *History of New England*, ii, 79.

days. Thus ended the ministrations of Richard Gibson in America and thus died the first Episcopal church in New Hampshire.

As the population of Massachusetts expanded, her people crossed the northern boundary, made themselves at home in southern New Hampshire, and established in those parts their religion and their politics. The original settlement on the Piscataqua was surrounded and almost overwhelmed by the advancing outposts of Massachusetts civilization. Puritan Congregationalism became the dominant religion, and the original Portsmouth settlers and their descendants either became half-hearted Dissenters or held their peace. Although they apparently conformed to the Massachusetts church, few, if any, became genuine Congregationalists; and, as John Winthrop expressed it, "most of them fell back in time, embracing this present world." Their devotion to the Church of England, though sometimes latent, persisted and patiently awaited an opportunity to reassert itself.¹

Almost a century elapsed between the departure of Richard Gibson and the reappearance of an Episcopal church in Portsmouth. About 1730, however, a number of the more prominent families combined to organize a society which should worship according to the forms of the English church. A zealous churchman in the mother country contributed an attractive bit of land, while the Queen exhibited the royal approval by presenting to the parish a service of plate for the altar and a number of stalwart prayer-books. An edifice named Queen's Chapel was soon erected, in which the Reverend Arthur Browne ministered unto an aristocratic assembly of Portsmouth's first families.² The established

1. It is perhaps significant that the only Anglican clergyman in New England in 1680 resided at Portsmouth. See Arthur Lyon Cross's *Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies*, p. 28.

2. Calvin R. Batchelder's *History of the Eastern Diocese*, i, 140-147.

church of New Hampshire was still Congregational, but toleration of all trinitarian Protestant sects had gradually become the religious basis in New England. Thus Mr. Browne was not likely to suffer the fate of Mr. Gibson. On the contrary, his church flourished and soon came to be identified with wealth and office-holding. The governor of the province worshiped there, in a pew raised a little above the rest and surmounted by a heavy wooden canopy which bore the royal arms and festoons of red plush. And many a Portsmouth citizen, for one reason or another, was drawn back into the fold of the Church of England. Although this reassertion or recantation, as the case might be, was very pronounced at Portsmouth, the rest of New Hampshire held fast to its traditions and beliefs and looked askance at anything resembling an extension of Episcopalianism. Thus there existed side by side the church of the court and the church of the people. So long as neither interfered with the other all would be well, but any aggressive gesture by either party would probably lead to serious consequences.

The first conflict between the denominations occurred in 1758 when the Congregational ministers, at their annual convention, petitioned Benning Wentworth to authorize the founding of a college in New Hampshire. The governor agreed to do so providing the institution should be under the control of the Bishop of London, who was the recognized head of the Episcopal church in the American colonies. This proviso was, of course, more than the Congregationalists could consider. In the following year they submitted a compromise proposition, but Benning Wentworth stood firm and they were obliged to abandon their commendable project.¹ There could be no prospect of an institution of learning consistent with the religious convictions of the people of New

1. New Hampshire Historical Society's *Collections*, ix, 36-39, and Adams's *Annals of Portsmouth*, p. 230.

Hampshire while Benning Wentworth occupied the governor's chair.

Three or four years later an educational movement of a different nature fared somewhat better at Portsmouth. The Reverend Eleazar Wheelock of Lebanon, Connecticut, after at least one failure, succeeded in interesting the governor in his school which trained missionaries, both white and red, for service among the Indians. How much Benning Wentworth cared about civilizing the savages is a question, but he approved an appropriation of £50 for this purpose in 1763, and offered Wheelock a tract of land for his school if he should choose to move it to western New Hampshire. This was encouraging to Wheelock, but he did not at once avail himself of the latter proposition because the continuance of his work depended largely upon funds which he hoped to raise in Great Britain. In the meantime John Wentworth succeeded his uncle as governor. This made the future look even brighter for the Indian school. In December, 1766, the young Governor met Wheelock's representatives at Bath, just before his return to America, subscribed £21 to the fund and promised to grant a township to the school if it should seek a home in New Hampshire.¹ The appeal for financial aid for the education of the Indians was surprisingly successful in the mother country, and one cannot but admire the way in which Wheelock managed his campaign. In order to engage the attention and interest of the British public he sent a full-blooded American Indian, whom he had educated, to address English congregations. This was Samson Occom. He had a natural gift for preaching, and many of those who out of curiosity went to hear him were induced to contribute to the fund.

Lord Dartmouth opened the subscription with £50. The King followed with £200, and within a few months the fund amounted

1. Frederick Chase's *History of Dartmouth College*, p. 55.

to more than £11,000. The only serious rebuff which Occom and his escort, Nathaniel Whitaker, received was from the Church of England. When the dignitaries of that denomination discovered that the Indian had been ordained in the Presbyterian church six or seven years earlier, they became very cool towards him, and publicly advised their adherents to refrain from encouraging the project for which he spoke.¹ Nevertheless, the mission was unmistakably successful; so much so, in fact, that it seemed advisable to appoint a board of trustees to handle the contributions. The board was organized in London in January, 1767, and Lord Dartmouth, who had shown more active interest than any other Englishman except George Whitefield, was elected president of the body.

In the spring of 1768 Occom and Whitaker, having completed their campaign, returned to America, and found Dr. Wheelock on the point of choosing a new location for his institution. There was only one vital reason for moving the school from Connecticut, and that was the advantage to be gained from being nearer the Indian country. Wheelock was inclined to favor the valley of the Susquehanna; others pointed out the merits of Maine, Virginia, Carolina, Ohio, western Massachusetts, and the upper reaches of the Hudson. The advocates of Albany were almost importunate in their efforts to persuade, and for a while it looked as if they would prevail; but Wheelock complained that the city was "much frequented by people of loose lives," and he decided to interview Governor John Wentworth at Portsmouth before making up his mind. When they met, Wentworth reasserted his readiness to grant a township six miles square in the Connecticut Valley as an endowment for the institution if the decision should be in favor of New Hampshire, and he suggested other advantages which would attend locating in his province. The most persuasive of

1. Chase's *History of Dartmouth College*, pp. 53-54.

these were the implied promise of a charter and the fact that the proposed district was largely peopled by men from Connecticut, many of them old neighbors of the Wheelock family. So although Wheelock still yearned for the fertile valley of the Susquehanna he declared his readiness to establish the school on the Connecticut, if the trustees should favor the latter location. The matter was submitted to the Board, and in the course of time they reported their preference for the Cohoss region of New Hampshire because of its convenient situation, midway between the Indians of the Six Nations and those of the north and east.

Wentworth, true to his word, now offered the forfeited township of Landaff as a site and endowment for the institution, and naturally expected that his official generosity would determine its location. Although Landaff was in the Cohoss region it was not on the Connecticut, and for that reason it seemed to Wheelock much less attractive than some of the neighboring towns. Furthermore, the landowners throughout that part of New Hampshire were eager to have the school located in towns in which they were interested, and they vied with each other in making propositions to Wheelock. Although Wentworth owned tracts of land in some of these towns and knew that the proximity of the school would increase their value, he would not allow such considerations to influence his choice.¹ His heart was set upon Landaff, and he liked not the competitive bidding of the other towns. But the bidding continued, mainly between Haverhill, Orford, and Hanover, until finally on July 5, 1770, Hanover won the coveted award.

Meanwhile Wheelock had devoted much time and energy to the drafting of a charter for his institution. The importance of incorporation had been on his mind for many years, and more than once he had petitioned the Connecticut assembly to that end,

1. Chase's *History of Dartmouth College*, p. 141.

but in vain. Likewise his prayers to the government in England had met with no success. "I have rode many hundred miles and spent much time in the affair," he once lamented, "but God has shut up every way hitherto, notwithstanding some have loaded me with shame that I go on without it."¹ Now that his wish was about to be granted he spent weeks and months over the document, fearful lest some clause might give offense to the English trustees, who, he knew, did not favor incorporation. Towards the end of August, 1769, Wheelock sent the result of his efforts to Wentworth, and anxiously awaited his comments upon it. The proposed instrument recognized the existence of "the gentlemen of the trust in England," but gave the actual government of the institution to an American board of trustees.²

Wentworth studied the document carefully, amended it, and returned it to Wheelock for his consideration. The fact that Wheelock, without the consent of the English trustees, was turning his Indian mission school into a self-governing academy or college "for the education and instruction of youths of the English and also of the Indian tribes in this land" did not trouble the Governor so much as one would have expected; but there were two provisions in the proposed charter which he wished to change. The first concerned the personnel of the American board. Wheelock wished it to consist almost exclusively of men from Connecticut who were old friends and neighbors of the Indian school. Wentworth felt that if the institution were to be a New Hampshire college, a majority of the trustees should be New Hampshire men. Although Wheelock was a man of strong opinions, he finally agreed to a compromise which would achieve Wentworth's object in the course of a few years. The second amendment, how-

1. Chase's *History of Dartmouth College*, p. 95.

2. "Wheelock Manuscripts," no. 769663.1 in the Dartmouth College Library.

ever, gave him genuine alarm, and he opposed it bitterly. This was the Governor's recommendation that the Bishop of London be added to the English board, in order to counteract the prevailing impression that the college would be founded upon hostility to the Established Church. The appointment would not be *ex officio*, and at the demise of the present bishop the vacancy would be filled like that of any other member. In the meantime, however, the institution would be assured of the good will of the English church. "This is so open and candid," argued Wentworth, "that I think it cannot be a bugbear to any man of common sense, nor be objected to unless upon party principles incompatible with and dishonorable to our generous plan of education and government proposed."

Wheelock probably considered himself a "man of common sense," but to expect a Connecticut Dissenter to appoint the Bishop of London a trustee of his college was preposterous. What was the Governor thinking of? Was this an insidious plot to deliver the school into the hands of its enemies? Did it foreshadow that event which all New England feared, — the appointment of an American bishop? Wheelock rarely welcomed suggestions of any kind; the present proposal quite upset his equanimity. Some of his friends tried to persuade him that since under the charter the English board was nothing but a figure-head it would make no difference if an Episcopal prelate were a member of it. In the words of his closest adviser, "the Bishop of London, being only a nominal member of the Trust in England, is but a mere matter of moonshine, and not worthy of consideration." But Wheelock could not take that view. If the Governor insisted upon this amendment, the college would seek a home in some other province than New Hampshire.¹ Fortunately, however, he did not

1. *Eleazar Wheelock to Hugh Wallace*, September 30, 1769; in the "Wheelock Manuscripts," no. 769530.1.

express his sentiments so strongly when he penned his reply to Wentworth. Instead, he merely queried the authority of his Excellency "or any other man" to add a member to the English board, which had, of course, complete control of its own membership. On this point the clergyman proved himself a better lawyer than the Governor, and Wentworth was obliged to yield.

When the business had progressed thus far it was natural that the question of a name for the institution should arise. Wheelock suggested that it be called *Wentworth College*,¹ as well it might, for the conversion of the Indian school into a provincial college was due to John Wentworth more than to any other one man. But modesty seems to have prevented the adoption of this complimentary suggestion. To name it in honor of Lord Dartmouth, however, his Excellency "cheerfully consented" and issued the charter of Dartmouth College on December 13, 1769.² Although disappointed in the matter of location, the Governor fulfilled his promise of endowment by granting to the institution the township of Landaff, and his uncle, Benning Wentworth, did likewise by presenting to the trustees the five hundred acre tract which, according to his custom, he had reserved to himself when granting the township of Hanover.

As has already been indicated, most of Wheelock's friends saw neither danger nor ground for suspicion in Wentworth's attempt to add the Bishop of London to the English board, but if they had known the contents of a personal letter which he wrote at that time they might have taken a different view. The main part of the communication ran as follows, and shows its author in a new rôle:

When you was at Portsmouth last, we had some talk about the state of the Church of England: at present it is in a critical situation

1. Shirley's *Dartmouth College Causes*, p. 34.

2. *Dartmouth Manuscripts*, ii, 71.

in this province and may be extended through the whole without any difficulty or opposition, and with very little expense which cannot be more nobly applied. The country now settling everywhere are very poor, have been used to public worship, and if the church service was performed without expence or any zealous attempts to proselyte, the the people would naturally flock to it; and from the regularity, good order and native merit of the Church would soon be attached to it sufficiently. They are now in very many places broke to pieces by sects, so that even the regular dissenting parishes are become a prey to innumerable secessions, of which I can perceive they are themselves much wearied. Therefore this is the time, which once passed may never again be recovered: but to embrace this opportunity requires caution, prudence and secrecy.

The foible of this country throughout is jealousy, civil and religious. I would therefore wish to see one clergyman a year established in this province. Perhaps if his Majesty would be graciously pleased to allow a chaplain to his governor for the time being, it would be the most unexceptionable introduction of this plan. In my present situation, if I had a chaplain — a man of good sense, benevolent disposition and undissembled piety, that had some considerable family connections in the country — under my immediate advice and protection in my family, I really believe in two years from the day he arrived I could form a little parish of five hundred souls, who now have no public worship at all, but believe there is not any material difference between the Church of England and the Church of Rome. By this means I verily believe the Church would spread fast in New England, and most certainly would produce very desirable effects in the administration of the civil government.¹

During the previous twenty-five years the Episcopal church in New Hampshire had received aid and support from two main

1. *John Wentworth to Joseph Harrison*, September 24, 1769. Wolfeborough was to be the center of the "little parish" which the Governor was confident he could form. Divine services were held at Wentworth House during the summer months, whenever a clergyman was visiting there, and according to Wentworth "the people came fourteen miles" to attend. He was convinced that "nineteen out of twenty would join the Church if they had the opportunity." There is a copy of an interesting letter from him to the Bishop of London on this subject in the "British Transcripts" in the Library of Congress. L C 313: Fulham Mss., 8, 9, and 10.

sources; one was the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the other was Benning Wentworth. The Society had been founded in 1701 with the purpose of sending missionaries to those colonies where the Church of England was not dominant. The majority of our ancestors looked upon its agents with disfavor, not to say distrust; and well they might, for even in New England the number of their converts was surprising. As yet they had not made alarming inroads upon the religious life of New Hampshire, but Benning Wentworth had laid a formidable foundation for the gradual conversion of the province by giving to the Society one share in every township granted by him; likewise, he reserved one share "for a glebe for the Church of England." Upon this foundation his successor now intended to erect an edifice in the following ingenious manner:

I would wish to form, or rather establish, the Church in this province upon a permanent system, which was wisely begun in some good degree by my good uncle, the late governor. The first great step will be to get an appointment of his Majesty's chaplain at a salary of at least £100 sterling per annum, some suitable gentleman I would find and recommend, for whose conduct I would be responsible; and if, contrary to my hopes, he should deviate from his duty I would suspend him from the salary and directly give information to his diocesan. After two years had in some measure worn off the prejudices, I would recommend that a missionary be appointed for some suitable town with a salary of fifty pounds per annum, and to reside on that right of land reserved in many towns for the Society for Propagating the Gospel. By this means their lands would be[come] very valuable, and in time six times more than maintain their schools and clergy in this province, and not cost them a pound. . . . By a steady, moderate and uniform adherence to such a plan as this, I think I could answer in ten years to establish at least forty good parishes in this province, which should not cost the Society more than six salaries of £50 per annum, to fall with the first incumbents and leave the whole forty more than 100 guineas each per annum, arising out of their own lands, and without one murmur of inquietude in the whole country.

I have seen a letter to Mr. Browne from the Society upon the subject of their lands. Had I been a member of that noble society, which I yet hope to be, I would have written to them a full and just state of the matter; but was apprehensive of interfering lest I give umbrage. However, my dear sir, I cordially venerate the Church of England, and hope to see it universal in this province, whose lasting welfare I have much and sincerely at heart. Whatever is done in this proposed plan must be without parade or show, and under powerful direction, or the whole matter will be injured rather than served. I should think if the Bishop of London should wish well to this scheme, from being convinced of its utility and speedy practicability, his Lordship could represent it to his Majesty so effectually as to obtain the chaplainship, which would be so eminently advantageous to the cause of our religion, and exceedingly dignify and facilitate the political administration of government; both of them, you are sensible, sir, at this time requiring all the care and prudence they can have.¹

Wentworth's covert zeal for the Church of England did not interfere with his open interest in Dartmouth College. Indeed, forgetful of his *alma mater* he termed the little institution at Hanover "the most noble, useful, and truly pious foundation now in America," and constantly exhorted the Assembly to appropriate funds for its support, "lest the world should think that the interests of literature and Christianity were difficult causes to obtain in New Hampshire."² Since 1640 Harvard College had enjoyed a monopoly of the right to ferry between Boston and Charlestown. Wentworth induced the New Hampshire legislators to grant a similar privilege to Dartmouth by giving the College the exclusive right to operate a ferry between Hanover and the opposite shore of the Connecticut River.³ Nor did his encouragement consist merely in providing for its material wants. Probably any governor would have done as much in that par-

1. *John Wentworth to Joseph Harrison*, September 24, 1769.

2. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 274.

3. J. K. Lord's *History of Dartmouth College*, p. 648.

ticular, but John Wentworth contributed also a personal interest and enthusiasm which meant much to the infant college. Although there were not more than a dozen students resident at Hanover in 1771, he resolved that Commencement should be celebrated with all possible dignity and festivity. The twenty-eighth of August was the appointed day. During the previous week the Governor and a company of the most distinguished gentlemen in the province assembled at Portsmouth, whence in a merry cavalcade they set out for Hanover by the way of Woburn.¹

At this first Commencement of Dartmouth only four students received degrees, but their graduation did not lack gaiety. Our ancestors found particular delight in the spectacle of an ox roasted whole and in its subsequent consumption. Upon this occasion the barbecue was provided at the expense of the Governor, and it was accompanied by enough rum to render the college cook, and perhaps others, *hors de combat* for the next twenty-four hours. At all events, Wentworth and his friends seem to have found this first Commencement Day thoroughly enjoyable, and several months afterward they commemorated it by presenting President Wheelock with a beautiful silver punch bowl suitably inscribed. The idea of a memorial gift originated with the Governor, who induced Dr. Cutter to collect contributions from the other members of the party; but history does not tell us who was responsible for the appropriate form which the gift took.²

One of the first four graduates was a young man named Silvanus Ripley. Something about him attracted the notice of the Governor. Possibly it was the "Salutatory Oration upon the Virtues" with which Ripley opened the Commencement exer-

1. *New Hampshire Gazette*, August 23, 1771.

2. Benjamin Cutter's *Cutter Family in New England*, pp. 315-317.

cises. More probably it was his engaging personality. At any rate he won the favor of the Governor, and with that in addition to the brains which he already possessed he might well anticipate rapid advancement and a brilliant future. But from the Governor's point of view there was one serious obstacle: presumably by birth and certainly by education Ripley was a Presbyterian. To Wentworth this seemed unfortunate; but was it insuperable? When Henry of Navarre was obliged to choose between Protestantism and the crown of France, he chose the crown. Was it likely, then, that Ripley would let his Presbyterianism stand in the way of a career? And if Ripley, the most promising of Dr. Wheelock's disciples, were converted to the Church of England, would not a number of his fellow students follow his example? The Governor saw no reason why his experiment should not succeed. Apparently, he failed to realize that his young friend's conviction in favor of the Presbyterian church might be as strong as his own predilection for bishops and prayer-books. Within a year from the time of his graduation Ripley was appointed a tutor in the College, and he soon proved himself invaluable both as a teacher at Hanover and as a missionary among the Indians. His life was full of hardships, but his heart was in his work, and he went about doing good with no thought of his own comfort or of his advancement in this world.

In the late summer of 1773 Wentworth approached Ripley with the suggestion that there was an opening "in the most respectable parish in New England," and that if he would take orders in the Church of England the Governor could assure him of the appointment. The position was that of "assistant, and afterwards, no doubt, rector of King's Chapel at Boston," where, according to Wentworth, Ripley would be "an honor to the College and an ornament to the Church."¹ As an additional induce-

1. Chase's *History of Dartmouth College*, pp. 256-257.

ment Wentworth argued that his acceptance would be of great benefit to the College. "Providence," he declared, "seems to have opened this door to establish a friend of Dartmouth in an important situation for its guard and defence against the unfriendliness in that quarter." Ripley beheld the door, but he was not sure that it was Providence who had opened it. The longer he contemplated the situation, the more he fancied a resemblance to the fourth chapter of Matthew, and after due reflection he returned a negative answer to his tempting sponsor.¹

Whether Dr. Wheelock divined Wentworth's intention to bring the light to Dartmouth, or not, the Governor's purpose was no secret among Churchmen. A gentleman, who signed himself R. C.,² made an ecclesiastical survey of the Connecticut Valley for the benefit of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and gave a detailed report of the condition and prospects of the Episcopal church in that part of the province. In almost all the settlements from Alstead to Lancaster he found groups of people who welcomed him and begged for prayer-books. The strongest of these groups was settled at Claremont, where a schoolmaster, sent out by the Society, had gradually formed a congregation which showed more vitality than that organized by "a few dissenters." But the most interesting item concerns the town of Hanover, where, according to our informant, "is Dr. W.'s college, which Governor Wentworth is fully persuaded in time he shall bring about, with the blessing of God, to be of the Establishment."³ Was this, then, the real motive behind the Governor's

1. "Wheelock Manuscripts," no. 774512, in the Dartmouth College Library.

2. This was probably the Reverend Ranna Cossitt, who later became the first rector of Claremont. In 1774 Wentworth strongly recommended that he be elected a member of the American board of trustees. See Calvin R. Batchelder's *History of the Eastern Diocese*, i, 180-185; also Chase's *History of Dartmouth College*, p. 288.

3. "Wheelock Manuscripts," no. 773209.

apparently benevolent interest in Wheelock's institution? Did he promote Dartmouth College merely with the intention of strengthening the Church of England in New Hampshire? Or was this proselyting zeal at least secondary to his desire to give his province an institution of learning which, regardless of denomination, should create more intelligent citizens? Wentworth's general character gives us one answer; his persistent attempts towards Episcopal control give us another.

One would think that these developments, or at least gestures, would have deprived Dr. Wheelock of no small amount of sleep first and last. Certainly his original suspicions were amply confirmed. But if Wheelock was troubled he preserved a placid exterior and matched his wits against the Governor's. He and his institution had everything to gain from Wentworth's friendship. There should, therefore, be no open break, however irritating the question of denomination might become. On the other hand, he did not intend to give an inch to the traditional enemies of his church. In order to achieve the maximum good for Dartmouth he adopted a policy of tactful vigilance. Thus in the same letter in which he discouraged the election of the Bishop of London, he suggested that the College should be named *Wentworth*; and when the Governor proposed that Ripley should take orders and avail himself of the vacancy at King's Chapel, Wheelock, with admirable self-control, replied that the tutor could not be spared from the College. Then he adroitly removed whatever injury might remain by conferring the degree of Doctor of Laws upon the disappointed executive. Although not naturally a diplomat, Dr. Wheelock believed that he could beat the Governor at his own game when there was sufficient reason for his making the effort to do so. The results sustained his judgment. For five years he checked every dangerous move Wentworth made, and accomplished his purpose so skilfully that the Governor never quite

understood why his campaign did not progress. But whether Wheelock could have continued to do this indefinitely is doubtful. Probably the president of Dartmouth College felt more relief than he would have liked to admit when the outbreak of the American Revolution put an end to the ecclesiastical manoeuvres of Governor John Wentworth.

CHAPTER X.

DISTANT THUNDER

WHEN Wentworth returned from England in the spring of 1767, the American colonies were enjoying a happy respite from what they considered iniquitous taxation. The Stamp Act had been repealed, and the Revenue Act of 1764 had been superseded by a less burdensome tariff. The right of Parliament to make laws binding upon the colonies "in all cases whatsoever" had been asserted in the Declaratory Act, to be sure, but the majority of Americans cheerfully overlooked this manifesto and gave themselves up to rejoicing in the repeal of the Stamp Act. At New York, for instance, the people voted statues to both William Pitt and George III, and the colonists in general looked forward to an era of peace and prosperity. On this tide of good feeling John Wentworth came into office, and the fact that he had been active in bringing about the apparent change of policy led the men of New Hampshire to regard him as their champion. Probably no royal governor ever received a more genuine welcome to the scene of his duties than that accorded to Wentworth in June, 1767. "I am extremely happy," he wrote a few weeks later, "in the universal esteem of all this province, who emulate each other in obliging me and endeavoring to make my administration as easy and as profitable as they can. Whatever surmises may have arisen, or disgust taken place, against the other provinces, New Hampshire is not in the least involved in it. They are obedient, faithful subjects, and ready to exert their utmost power to support and defend the British government."¹

1. *John Wentworth to Stephen Aphthorp*, August 18, 1767.

While America rejoiced, Parliament, under the guidance of a new Chancellor of the Exchequer, was devising a fresh schedule of taxes for the colonies and the machinery for collecting them. New duties should be laid upon goods imported, and the customs service should be reorganized. These measures took the form of the Townshend Acts, which taxed the importation of two or three English manufactures and also of tea. In order to insure the collection of these duties an American board of commissioners of the customs was provided; and in order to facilitate the work of the Board convenient admiralty courts, which meant trial without jury, were established to handle revenue cases. These laws were passed in 1767, and it was not long before their effect was felt in the colonies. The commissioners of the customs, five in number, were sent to Boston, where they arrived on Guy Fawkes Day. They reorganized the service and made it efficient, but their methods irritated the Americans and troubled Wentworth. The Governor decried the colonists' tendency to be "hasty, zealous, and inconsiderate" in their opposition, but he was convinced that his countrymen were "possessed of hearts most unexceptionally attached, nay bigoted, to their King and the British government." "Is it not to be regretted," he wrote in a personal letter, "that such subjects should be goaded into excess, by either a deficiency or contempt of conciliating prudence in those who have to carry a disagreeable measure into execution; instead of introducing it, as to British subjects, loading it with contemptuous, positive, exclusive edicts, calculated to alarm and astonish? Can other than irregularity be expected from such conduct, or should a people be indiscriminately condemned for resentment, when even every officer in the department complain and groan under the supercilious austerities they can scarcely endure? Some of them that are gentlemen of worth and independence I know are scarcely restrained from becoming private men, that they may vindicate

their right to decency with their swords. It would be endless to instance. In short, sir, I would risk my eternal salvation that with moderation, prudence, and temper the act would have surely taken place with very little difficulty. Not one healing measure has yet appeared. All have been (in the sailors' style) 'Obey the act and be damned!' The answer is readily known from London Bridge through all his Majesty's dominions, without enquiring what it is. All Englishmen will huzza out, 'We'll be damned if we do!'"¹

Probably the particular "irregularity" Wentworth had in mind was the riot in Boston which had followed the seizure of John Hancock's sloop *Liberty*. Upon a somewhat doubtful accusation of smuggling, the *Liberty* was libeled by the customs officers at Boston and was towed out into the harbor until she lay under the guns of a man-of-war that had been sent hither at the request of the commissioners. A crowd gathered to watch these proceedings, but did not interfere with the seizure of the vessel. Nevertheless, the atmosphere must have been tense, for when the officials turned away from the wharf and walked towards the custom house they were attacked by the crowd and so roughly handled that two of them were unable to attend to their duties for several days. Later in the evening a mob visited the houses of various officers of the customs and gave vent to its feelings by smashing windows. Finally, the rioters seized the collector's pleasure boat, "built by himself in a particular and elegant manner," dragged it through the streets, and burned it on the Common. It is not surprising that after this demonstration the commissioners, with one exception, decided to remove themselves and their families from the turbulent town. At first they sought safety on board the man-of-war in the harbor, and later found more comfortable quarters in Castle William, now Fort

1. *John Wentworth to Dr. Belham*, August 9, 1768.

Independence. Neither is it surprising that they urgently requested the government in England to send soldiers for their support or protection as the case might demand.

To Wentworth such disturbances seemed as unnecessary as they were disgraceful, and he was glad to be able to express his sentiments in a letter to one of his friends.

These Americans have been very wrong, but any dispassionate observer would honestly say that those who have made them so are more culpable. I mean in the execution, — not the Acts themselves, they are not for me to consider. Nor would they have been effectually opposed had they civilly and with tolerable decency and good humor been presented, instead of crammed down harshly and with contempt, *nolens volens*. I am convinced this is the true case from my own experience. On my arrival here the same temper pervaded: I considered well the genius and prevailing opinions of the people; marked closely the progress of inquietude, and the operation it had after the crisis. From hence I soon determined that the grand secret of peace and safety was to cause them to think before they acted, the longer the better; and to be steady, open, and resolute, without any mystery or intrigue. In this way there never will be great tumults. It is impracticable to raise a great dangerous mob if all the business is understood. In fact, men will not be led on to broken heads, gaols, and gallows, unless they are somehow deceived.

I will note you an instance in point. In this establishment of revenue one gentleman was (unjustly I verily believe) universally detested at all times and places where he was. Every insult and distress was thrown upon him, his person and property vilified and destroyed outrageously. The course of his duty required his attendance here. The zealots from Boston notified their more moderate brethern here, and expected every indignity and resentment against the officer on his arrival, and to have driven him out of town. I heard of his coming in time, and determined at all events to secure this first design, knowing it would give a complexion to all future measures, either for or against my peace and the honor of the province.

Immediately I enquired of some warm people, what the business of such an officer was. They told me what I knew well enough before. I observed there was no harm in it, except to custom-house officers whom it might torment. They joined, and were glad he was coming. I

wished he might. Thus they became his guard. To others I observed how hard it was that Boston had all their money. They joined, and embraced the artifice of making the first so happy that the rest should wish to travel among us. By degrees it was known he was to come; three or four days abused, three or four more they enquired, and found both the man and his duty entirely innoxious; and by his arrival all was well. He was here, as any other gentleman, kindly entertained. He behaved well, and since has returned to Boston, where he is now received in peace. On his arrival I took occasion to have him in my coach with me two or three times, by way of leading an example. At his departure he expressed great satisfaction and respect to the province.

In any other way we should have had a flaming riot, and I might have fallen, for I am positively determined to suppress any open tumult in person at all risk, and by no means to suffer the laws to be violently broken or the King's authority condemned. I will first prevent by prudence, but if necessary I will suppress by all the power the law hath, if I am left singly to oppose thousands. From this recital you'll see the genius of the people, and that candor and reason are more necessary than troops and ships to govern them by.¹

If the radical element in the population at first mistook this enlightened policy for timidity they did not deceive themselves for long. Wentworth usually spoke softly, but he was a man of action, and his remark about suppressing disorder, personally and at all risk, was not mere bravado. At thirty years of age he knew what many executives fail to realize at sixty, — that "much depends upon acting with spirit upon the occasion." And no one could accuse him of not acting with spirit in the episode which he described as follows:

Sometime since, the sheriff, as was his duty, informed me that three hundred men in arms were within two miles, determined to rescue a prisoner from execution. It was then midnight. I ordered him to notify the colonel of militia in town to attend me in fifteen minutes, on the parade by the gaol, with one hundred men. Called all the council [that] could be found to the same place, at the same time they were all

1. *John Wentworth to Dr. Belham*, August 9, 1768.

paraded. Bitter cold; and the colonel an old gentleman, seventy-two years old, of great fortune, and my uncle. I told them what they were called together for; gave orders on the assault being made to fire and kill as many as they could, and then to take what prisoners was possible to hang up the next day by a trial at law. This order was carried to the insurgents in eight minutes by one of their scouts, whose fears of a gallows magnified our numbers to more than a regiment, and so disheartened the poor mob (who turned out to be only ninety) that they all fled, each man to his tent. Since that time we have not had even an escape, though the prison may be knocked down by an old woman.¹

When the Townshend Acts had been in force a few months, the people of Massachusetts had seen enough of the commissioners and their methods to be certain that they desired the repeal of the unpopular laws. Remembering the apparent good result of joint effort on the part of the colonies in their recent opposition to the Stamp Act, the Massachusetts House of Representatives sent a circular letter to the other assemblies on the continent, inviting an exchange of ideas and recommending concerted action in their present difficulty. When this letter reached Portsmouth Governor Wentworth prevailed upon the New Hampshire Assembly to decline the invitation. He did not place any impediment in the way of their petitioning the Crown as representatives of a single province, but he discouraged their entering any union or combination with the others. Thus New Hampshire followed the precedent she had established at the time of the Stamp Act Congress. She held aloof from her more aggressive sisters and trusted to the efficacy of separate pleas for relief.² Nevertheless, by indorsing the Virginia Resolves of 1768 and 1769, which denied the right of Parliament to tax the colonies, the representatives of New Hampshire made it clear that although their method of securing redress

1. *John Wentworth to Dr. Belham*, August 9, 1768.

2. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough*, June 25, 1768; also *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 187-188, 248-249.

might differ from that of the other assemblies their political ideas were in perfect accord with those of their neighbors.

The attitude of the merchants resembled that of the legislators. In a number of the other colonies many of the leading citizens made agreements not to import any goods which were taxed by Parliament. The members of these "associations," as they were called, intended to bring economic pressure to bear upon the exporting houses of England and thus to oblige the government to repeal the taxes. The same method had been employed at the time of the Stamp Act, and with success. It was worth trying again. The scheme met with general favor and was adopted by the merchants of almost all the northern colonies. But the business men of Portsmouth turned a deaf ear to any such proposition in spite of the entreaties of their friends in Boston. Was this, too, due to the exhortation of the popular governor of New Hampshire? Indirectly, perhaps; but the most convincing explanation appears in the fact that in many cases the leading merchants were also office-holders appointed by the Crown. If they valued their commissions and the social prestige which their offices conferred they would be hesitant, to say the least, about entering into a scheme which savored of active opposition to the imperial government.

A natural corollary to the policy of non-importation was the increase of manufacturing in the colonies, a development which was thoroughly distasteful to the commercial element in Parliament. In the interest of English manufacturers the production of goods in the colonies had been discouraged by statute more than once. Woolen goods, for instance, might not be marketed outside the limits of the province in which they were made; and although America was the land of furs, a similar restriction prevented the extensive manufacture of hats in the colonies. Likewise, lest the English iron industry should encounter serious competition the

Americans were not allowed to establish any steel furnaces or slitting mills.¹ The temptation to break these laws had always existed, and now that the non-importation agreements acted as a prohibitive tariff, enterprising men found it doubly difficult to resist. Furthermore, public opinion was in favor of frugality and economic independence. Wentworth felt the spirit of the times and became uneasy. "All the country seems possessed with a madness of manufacture and economy," he wrote to some merchant friends in London. "In this province we have enough to do to grow bread, and do not enter into any schemes, — but in the others every hovel wears the face of labor and industry. The soldiers, though idle artisans in Europe, are caressed to learn their various arts to the people, who secrete and cover their daily desertions to this purpose."²

The soldiers referred to were, of course, the two regiments which had been sent to Boston at the urgent request of the commissioners of the customs. The troops arrived early in October, 1768, and, although their presence did not lead at once to hostilities, Wentworth felt, and sometimes expressed, grave doubts concerning the wisdom of this new departure in colonial administration. When writing to the Marquis of Rockingham he was sure of a sympathetic reader, and likewise of a discreet friend. "I am at a loss," he declared, "to inform your Lordship of any real use or necessity for this armament. It cannot be advantageous to the revenue, which will not suffice to repay half of the expense. If it is intended to secure the dependence of the colonies, I fear it will operate the other way; perhaps military power may preserve the subjection of conquests, but I believe it is positively true that the just dependence of the British colonies in this continent can be ascertained only by a wise, moderate, and well-timed reforma-

1. W. E. H. Lecky's *England in the Eighteenth Century*, iii, 325.

2. *John Wentworth to Trecothick and Apthorp*, May 2, 1769.

tion and strengthening of their government.”¹ Precisely what measures the Governor had in mind when he penned the last phrase can be only conjectured, but in the light of subsequent events none can deny the wisdom of his main thesis.

Unlike both its predecessor and its successor the year 1769 was free from outbreaks of violence in the colonies, and superficial observers were inclined to take an optimistic view of the relations between America and England. John Wentworth saw more clearly. He rejoiced, of course, in the absence of riots, but he was not encouraged by the more recent phase of the controversy, for lawlessness of the moment had given way to a deep-rooted and almost universal political theory which denied the power of Parliament to tax the American colonies. Wentworth was prepared to crush the former with promptness and severity, but in the latter he recognized a more dangerous enemy, which lurked in every corner of his own well-behaved province. He knew not how to contend with this kind of foe, so elusive it was and yet so pervasive. Again he communicated his fears to his friend, the Marquis:

I sincerely wish I could think the colonies, though free from open riot, were likely to get back to their old ground. The contrary seems to me to be daily obtaining, and I really think that unless there are some means found to allay their apprehensions and jealousies, and to invigorate the powers of government in its first principles, these colonies will be forever the cause of difficulty and trouble to Great Britain. The conduct in the colonies was first impelled by vexation and passion into excess. It now seems subsiding into principle and system, infinitely more likely to get rooted than all the former noise and clamor. If these circumstances are early and wisely considered, mutual confidence will again flourish; but otherwise cordiality will soon be converted into perpetual distrust.²

1. *John Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham*, November 13, 1768.

2. *Ibid.*, September 17, 1769.

On two other occasions Wentworth's prophetic utterances were even more remarkable. When other men were blinded by ignorance or by obstinacy he saw the true significance of the situation, and knew that either reformation or revolution must come. As early as 1768 he urged the importance of tact and prudence in dealing with the Americans, and at the same time predicted the consequences of continued misgovernment. "I do aver positively that Great Britain has now the hearts, labour, and wealth of all her American colonies in her own power and disposal, and that by proper measures from this time you may date what casts their future time shall wear. I wish it might be thought best to let every present commotion subside, before any new measure is taken; make the officers more independent; entrust them to dispense the benefits to the friends of Government; hear and consider candidly their advice and information; and whenever they are found to be incapable of the service, remove them; and if unjust or unfaithful, punish to immediate irreversible death. Thus, sir, Great Britain will long rejoice in her colonies; otherwise, within a century she will have the love and alliance of a sister state that sprung from her own bowels."¹

Equally perspicacious was the prediction concerning his own province. Although New Hampshire, largely owing to its governor's influence and popularity, had as yet refrained from violent opposition to the imperial government, Wentworth was not deceived into thinking that his people had less spirit than those of the other colonies. "Our province is yet quiet," he wrote, a few days before the Boston Massacre, "and the only one, but will, I fear, soon enter. If they do, they'll exceed all the rest in zeal."

1. *John Wentworth to Dr. Belham*, August 9, 1768.

CHAPTER XI.

DARKENING SKIES

THE non-importation agreements made by the merchants of the American colonies produced the desired effect in England. British manufacturers and exporters suffered acutely from the loss of the American market, and the depression which followed in their business affairs threw a large number of wage-earners out of employment. The reduced purchasing power of the laboring class in turn affected all kinds of industries and brought the situation forcefully to the attention of Parliament. The author of the Townshend Acts was no longer living. In his place Lord North was endeavoring to devise ways and means for financing the empire. North realized that the present system of colonial taxation was both unremunerative to the government and hurtful to England's industries, and he advocated the repeal of the Townshend duties with the exception of the tax on tea, which was allowed to stand since the consumption or non-consumption of tea would not affect English manufacturers.

Parliament passed Lord North's measures, and the members may well have thought that an era of friendship would ensue in colonial affairs, which, except for the trifling tax on tea, were now on the same basis as after the repeal of the Stamp Act. There remained, of course, the old duties on molasses, sugar, wine, and tobacco, but serious objection had not been made to these in the days before the Townshend Acts were passed. Why should they cause unrest now? This would have been the reasonable view for any Englishman to hold in 1770, but it left out of account the American doctrine which had become almost universally ac-

cepted in the colonies during the previous four or five years. This doctrine maintained that the colonists could be taxed constitutionally only by their own assemblies. On this principle the remaining duties were as objectionable as those from which they had won relief. Furthermore, the administrative machinery erected under the Townshend Acts continued in operation and made the collection of the old duties more efficient and more vexatious than it had been in 1766. Hence, although the future might look bright to an Englishman in England, John Wentworth was convinced that Lord North's legislation was little more than a palliative. For other reasons, too, the Governor regarded the situation with uncomfortable forebodings.

Although the merchants of Portsmouth had declined to make a non-importation agreement, an incident which occurred in 1770 made it doubtful if they could continue to maintain their independence in this matter. A number of Boston dealers, who had refused to concur in the agreement existing between many of their neighbors and competitors, found public opinion against them so strong that they could not do business in Massachusetts. Portsmouth was the obvious place for merchants of their stripe, and to Portsmouth they removed. This infuriated the Bostonians, for they intended to force them into their combination or else to harry them out of the land. If Portsmouth accepted them, then Portsmouth should suffer likewise. The Massachusetts associates, therefore, declared commercial war upon all merchants of the Piscataqua by refusing to trade with them until they too should make a non-importation agreement. And in order to make the boycott more effective they wrote to Connecticut, New York, and all the southern provinces asking their coöperation. Apparently the capital of New Hampshire must choose between non-importation and starvation.¹ As it turned out, however, the

1. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough*, October 18, 1770.

situation was not so desperate as it seemed, for the established merchants of Portsmouth naturally disliked these new people, whose coming was likely to diminish their profits regardless of this rupture with the other colonies. A public meeting was held at which the people declared a boycott against the newcomers, and resolved that those who "encouraged, aided or assisted them should be esteemed enemies of the town."¹ Apparently this action satisfied the zealots at Boston, for Portsmouth neither starved nor decreed non-importation. But in the Bostonians' threat to destroy the commerce of New Hampshire Wentworth recognized a new force, with which he might have to contend at any time.

Another cause for uneasiness lay in the trend of events at Exeter. Although this was one of the oldest towns in the province, its inhabitants had never been so noticeably law-abiding as those of Portsmouth or Dover. They rarely hesitated to make their sentiments known either by word or by deed, and geographically they were just far enough removed from Portsmouth not to feel the personal influence of the Governor. Lately Exeter had begun to look to Boston for guidance, instead of to the capital, and in consequence had become the acknowledged center of disaffection in New Hampshire. When news of the Boston Massacre arrived, the citizens of Exeter held a town meeting and voted in favor of economy, the encouragement of domestic manufactures, and the non-consumption of tea.² Wentworth, recognizing these unfavorable symptoms, added Colonel Peter Gilman, Exeter's foremost citizen, to the Council, and hoped thus to bind the town to the government by ties of interest and affection; for if Massachusetts and the other colonies should exert economic

1. Adams's *Annals of Portsmouth*, pp. 226-227.

2. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Hillsborough*, April 28, 1770. See also, Charles H. Bell's *History of Exeter*, pp. 80-81.

pressure from without and Exeter should at the same time lead a rebellion from within, the administration of his Majesty's government would be difficult indeed.

Strange as it may seem, the first ebullition of unrest occurred not at Exeter, but at Portsmouth. One day, late in October, 1771, the brigantine *Resolution* sailed up the Piscataqua and entered her cargo at the custom-house. Her captain, however, carefully refrained from making any reference to a hundred hogsheads of molasses which were discovered by the revenue officers. This made trouble, of course, and the *Resolution* was seized by the government. About midnight on the twenty-ninth of October "a numerous company" of men, in disguise and armed with clubs, came aboard the vessel, persuaded some of the officers to go ashore, locked up the others in the cabin, and then unloaded and carried off the molasses at their leisure.¹ Wentworth was indignant, and immediately issued a proclamation offering a reward of two hundred dollars to any person or persons who would voluntarily give sufficient evidence to convict any of the principals in this mild riot. But popular opinion favored the conspirators; their names were never divulged, and the smuggling of the *Resolution's* cargo remains to this day unpunished.

After this episode comparative peace prevailed in New Hampshire for two years. Then the determination of the British government to seduce the Americans into drinking taxed tea caused demonstrations of varying degree throughout the continental colonies. Boston had its Tea Party. Portsmouth was more moderate, but no less determined, in her resistance. On the very day when the Bostonians emptied chests of tea into the harbor, Wentworth's fellow-townsmen held a public meeting and adopted a set of resolves. These made perfectly clear the issue between the Americans and Parliament, advocated "a union of all the

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, xviii, 606-607.

colonies" to obtain redress, and declared specifically that in case any tea of the East India Company were brought to Portsmouth, the inhabitants would use "every necessary method to prevent its being landed or sold." The first test of this threat occurred six months later, when, on the twenty-fifth of June, 1774, the mast-ship *Grosvenor* came up the harbor with twenty-seven chests of tea consigned to a merchant in Portsmouth. The Governor, well aware of recent events at Boston, knew that a critical moment was at hand and conducted himself accordingly.

As soon as Wentworth learned that the troublesome tea was approaching Portsmouth, he interviewed the consignee and had him write instructions to the master of the ship. These instructions the Governor entrusted to Captain Cochran of Fort William and Mary, who delivered them at sea. In this way concerted action was assured and any unnecessary delay avoided. On Monday, the 27th, Wentworth, with apparent unconcern, rode to Dover to spend the day. In his absence the merchant and master went to the custom-house, entered the ship and cargo, and at noon the tea was landed at the wharf. From there it was carted to the custom-house and safely stored before any people could assemble to obstruct its progress. The Governor believed that his absence was largely responsible for this peaceful landing of the tea, for the populace assumed that nothing so dangerous would be attempted except when he was at Portsmouth and consequently were caught napping. Perhaps this was the case. At any rate, when the news got abroad a town meeting was called for that very afternoon. As it was a summer day the people assembled in the open air, and at a well-chosen moment Governor Wentworth appeared on horseback, riding through the concourse and greeting his acquaintances in his usual friendly manner. Much to his delight the people reciprocated and treated him with

their customary kindness and respect. The temper of the meeting, too, was surprisingly moderate. The leaders argued that since the tea had been actually landed and placed in the custom house nothing could be done except by arrangement with the consignee. Therefore a committee of eleven was appointed to take the matter up with him. The town also chose a guard to protect the custom-house and the tea from violence.

On the following day the merchant and the committee came to terms. The former agreed to export the tea to Halifax, if the town of Portsmouth would reship it and protect it while in the harbor. Thereupon the conference adjourned to the custom-house "where the duty was openly and regularly paid, and the tea again carted through the streets publicly in the daytime, without noise, tumult, or insult."¹ After dark, it is true, "three overheated mariners (two of them strangers) endeavored to excite a mob to destroy the tea and the vessel hired to export it," but their designs were frustrated by Colonel Fenton and a few gentlemen, who personally guarded the sloop that night. Two days later the twenty-seven chests of tea, "perfectly safe and in good order," were on their way to Halifax.

John Wentworth's success in preventing a Portsmouth Tea Party is the more remarkable because the incident occurred at a time when his popularity was undergoing a severe strain. The Assembly which met early in May was urged by the Governor not to enter into any union or combination with the other provinces, but in spite of this exhortation it appointed a committee of correspondence, which should keep in touch with the forces of opposition throughout the continental colonies. Although the measure was passed by a bare majority of one, Wentworth realized that the representatives of the people were fast getting out of hand, and when he learned indirectly that the next bus-

1. *Parliamentary Register*, i, 62-63.

iness to come before them would be the election of delegates to a general American congress, he dissolved the Assembly in a straightforward but good-natured manner.¹ By so doing he hoped to keep his province out of the proposed congress. He hoped also to put an end to the dangerous committee of correspondence, which, in the eyes of constitutional law, ceased to be from the moment of dissolution.

Although legally non-existent, the committee of correspondence now boldly usurped some of the powers of the executive, and summoned the members of the Assembly to meet in the courthouse on July 6th for the avowed purpose of electing delegates to the First Continental Congress. In attempting to hold this meeting in a government building the committee made a mistake, for unless legally convened by the governor, the Assembly had no right to be there. Wentworth realized this, and when a sufficient number had collected in the Chamber of the Representatives he appeared before them, attended by his Council and the sheriff of Rockingham County. According to custom the members rose at his entrance. The Governor made a short speech, called their attention to the illegality of the meeting, and then bade them disperse without disturbing the King's peace. The representatives of the people knew that Wentworth was right, and that he usually meant what he said. After he left the room they discussed the situation briefly and then adjourned to a neighboring tavern. Being now within their rights, they proceeded with the business of the meeting and recommended that every parish in the province should send deputies to Exeter on July 21, to attend a convention which should elect delegates to the Continental Congress. Thus began the American Revolution in New Hampshire. On the appointed day the convention met. Colonel Nathaniel Folsom and Major John Sullivan were chosen

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 369.

to represent the province at Philadelphia, and three weeks later they were on their way to that town.¹

The First Continental Congress met in September, 1774, and continued to sit until late in October. Among its most important acts was the adoption of an agreement to make a united attack upon English industries, in order to force Parliament to change its colonial policy. By this covenant the delegates bound themselves and their constituents to import no merchandise whatsoever from Great Britain, and to practice economy in every way. Thus non-importation, which had proved an effective weapon in the hands of the individual colonies, became a national affair. Of this measure Wentworth took a curiously cynical view, and one of his observations is worthy of a modern ultra-economic historian. "The Continental Congress," he wrote, "have recommended a non-importation after 5th December next, which I believe will be adhered to very strictly because the party have large quantities by them, which in this case will yield an extortionate profit; but if the trade is unobstructed would probably bankrupt many of them."² He must have forgotten, however, that the Congress had taken care to prevent profiteering of this kind by threatening to boycott any merchants who should take advantage of the consequent shortage of goods.³

The immediate cause of the call for a Continental Congress had been the repressive measures adopted by Parliament to punish the people of Boston for their recent Tea Party. The harshest of these was the Boston Port Act which closed the harbor to all commerce until the inhabitants should reimburse the East India Company for the destruction of its tea. Since the town was largely dependent upon the other colonies for its food supply, the

1. *Parliamentary Register*, i, 64-66.

2. *John Wentworth to Corbyn Morris*, November 16, 1774.

3. *Journals of the Continental Congress* (Ford edition), i, 78.

Bostonians were thus confronted with the prospect of starvation. And since commerce was the mainspring of Boston's economic life, the injunction which became effective on the first of June, 1774, upset practically all the business of the community, and threw a large number of men out of employment. But the other colonies, indignant at this method of discipline, hastened to the rescue. Charleston, South Carolina, sent cargoes of rice; Virginia contributed almost nine thousand bushels of wheat and corn, while Pennsylvania gave more than a thousand barrels of flour. As New Hampshire produced barely enough food for her own sustenance the citizens of Portsmouth could not follow the example of the southern colonists, but they called a town meeting to determine in what manner they should help to alleviate the suffering in Boston. At first the inclination was to leave the matter to voluntary subscriptions, but at an adjournment of the meeting greater generosity prevailed and two hundred pounds from the town funds were voted "for the relief of the industrious poor" in Boston.¹ This amount, Wentworth remarked, was almost four times as great as Portsmouth's province tax. This being the case, he could hardly have been in doubt as to the genuine sympathy which his fellow-townsmen felt for their neighbors in the Massachusetts capital.

Up to this point in his administration John Wentworth had invariably practised his doctrine of being "steady, open, and resolute, without any mystery or intrigue," and the results of this policy had demonstrated its wisdom. In the autumn of 1774, however, an occasion arose which tempted the Governor to abandon his wise rule. General Gage, who had succeeded Thomas Hutchinson as governor of Massachusetts, found great difficulty in providing barracks for the British troops under his command. There were, of course, plenty of unemployed carpenters in Boston,

1. *Parliamentary Register*, i, 68-69.

but they either refused to work upon the buildings Gage had hired, or were prevented from doing so by a patriotic majority. As winter approached the situation became serious, and Gage asked Wentworth to see if New Hampshire carpenters could not be hired and sent to his aid. Clearly it was the Governor's duty to exert himself in his colleague's behalf, but when he attempted to do so surreptitiously Wentworth made his first serious mistake. Instead of explaining the situation to the leaders of the opposition and then advertising for builders, he worked secretly, employing Nicholas Austin of Middleton as his agent. Even Austin was not enlightened as to the nature of the work for which he was engaging the carpenters,¹ but the wages promised were generous and he had little difficulty in collecting in and about Wolfeborough a crew of "artificers," who were sent to Portsmouth for instructions. Wentworth offered them a dollar a day, provisions, and the loan of clothing "if necessary to their safety from popular resentments"; and toward the end of October General Gage was pleased to find fifteen New Hampshire carpenters among the men who were fitting up the improvised barracks at Boston.

Not many days passed before the Portsmouth committee of ways and means got wind of the affair. Then came the first outburst of public opinion against the Governor. Although his uncle, Hunking Wentworth, was its chairman, the committee passed and published a series of resolutions which were noticeably stronger in tone than any previously issued in New Hampshire. The Governor's conduct was described as "cruel and unmanly"; he himself was pronounced "an enemy to the community"; and the carpenters were declared to be unworthy of society, unless they should immediately "leave such scandalous employment and return to their respective habitations."² Poor Austin, the

1. *John Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham*, November 9, 1774.

2. *New Hampshire Gazette*, October 28, 1774.

innocent agent, fared even worse. Soon after the Portsmouth resolves were published, he was summoned before the Rochester committee of correspondence, in whose presence he was obliged to kneel, beg forgiveness, and promise in the future to abstain from any "act or deed contrary to the constitution of the country."¹ The carpenters, alarmed by the clamor against them, hastened to relinquish their jobs, and so brought to an end an episode that had threatened to set New Hampshire in flames.

Wentworth was more wounded by the resolves of the local committee than he was willing to admit, even to himself. In letters, written at that time and later, he attributed his difficulties not to his own change of policy but to the machinations of "Mr. Livius's few adherents," of whom Woodbury Langdon was the most formidable. According to the Governor, the resolves were the work of Woodbury Langdon alone, who, he declared, was and ever had been "Mr. L.'s steady friend and assistant in the whole of his plans."² The resolutions were issued over Hunking Wentworth's name, to be sure, but John explained that this was due to the fact that his uncle, the chairman of the committee, was a "superannuated, weak, already forgiven old squire" over whose eyes the Langdons and their party easily pulled the wool. In spite of these explanatory remarks the Governor's correspondents probably reflected that if he had endeavored to engage the carpenters in a frank and open manner, instead of in secret, his personal and political foes would have had no ground for calling him an enemy to the community. As things were, however, they made the most of his first false step and destroyed at one blow the abundant faith which the people of New Hampshire had had in their popular governor. From that moment the progress of the opposition was beyond his control.

1. *New Hampshire Gazette*, November 11, 1774.

2. *John Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham*, November 9, 1774.

CHAPTER XII.

THE STORM

IN October, 1774, the King in Council decided that it would be prudent to stop the private exportation of arms and ammunition to America, and an order to that end was issued forthwith. At the same time Lord Dartmouth sent a circular letter to the governors of the colonies commanding them to prevent the importation of munitions which might have escaped the authorities in England. In this way the British government hoped to reduce to a minimum the possibility of armed resistance on the part of the colonists. The precaution was wise, but the effect produced in America was quite the reverse of that which was intended. When news of the embargo reached Rhode Island, the Assembly voted to transfer almost all the cannon and ammunition from the provincial fort to Providence, in order to prevent their being seized by a British frigate which was lying off Newport. At the same time the fire-arms at Newport, belonging to the colony, were distributed proportionately among the counties. All this was done in a perfectly legal manner, for Rhode Island, like Connecticut, was almost autonomous, and its governor approved the action of the Assembly. It was useless for the other provincial governors to attempt to keep the contents of Dartmouth's letter a secret, when the governor of Rhode Island played into the hands of the colonists. From Providence a copy was sent to Boston, and with it traveled the story of Rhode Island's preparation for self-defense. From Boston the news was carried to Portsmouth by Paul Revere, who had already begun to play

the part of messenger in which he was destined to win great renown.¹

At Portsmouth the popular party could not hope to take possession of the munitions at the Castle in a legal manner, for even if the Assembly sanctioned such action the Governor would certainly withhold his consent. On the other hand, they did not wish to be outdone by the Rhode Islanders; it is quite probable, too, that the leaders of the opposition at Boston egged them on to immediate action. At any rate, as soon as Revere delivered his dispatches to Samuel Cutts, the latter hastily summoned the local committee of ways and means and laid the matter before them at a meeting which took place on the afternoon of December 13, 1774. Wentworth mistrusted that trouble would follow before long, and, guessing that it would take the form of an attempt to seize the Castle, he sent a short letter to Captain Cochran, who commanded the fort, advising him to be on his guard against a surprise attack.

The Governor's warning came none too soon. About noon on the 14th a drum began to beat through the streets of Portsmouth and a crowd soon gathered in the center of the town. Everyone seemed to know that an attack was to be made upon the fort and all were ready for action. Rumors to the effect that troops were embarking at Boston to seize and carry away New Hampshire's munitions lent zest to the enterprise. As soon as Wentworth learned what was going on, he sent the chief justice of the province to warn the populace against engaging in such an attempt. The chief justice did as he was bid. He read the Riot Act to the crowd which had assembled near the town-house; he told them that the offense they intended to commit was rebellion pure and simple; he entreated them to change their minds and disperse. But all in vain. The insurgents marched away towards

1. *Parliamentary Register*, i, 100-101.

the Castle and were joined *en route* by parties from Newcastle and Rye. All told they numbered about four hundred. Captain Cochran's garrison consisted of not more than five effective men, and the walls of the fort were very weak. Nevertheless, the Castle was equipped with cannon, small arms, and ammunition, and one cannot but think that if John Wentworth had been on the spot its defense would have been more spirited and more effectual.

News of the approaching disturbance reached Cochran about one o'clock and, according to his own account, he prepared to make the best defense he could. He "pointed some guns" at the places where he guessed the attack would be made and then awaited developments. "About three o'clock the fort was beset on all sides by upwards of four hundred men." Cochran warned them that if they advanced it would be at their peril; his words were unheeded. Then the garrison fired three four-pounders and afterwards some small arms; but, oddly enough, none of the assailants seems to have been killed or injured, and before the defenders could reload they were "stormed on all quarters" and taken prisoners. They remained in captivity about an hour and a half, during which time the attacking party hauled down the King's colors, broke open the powder-house and carried off the powder in boats. Having accomplished their purpose, they released Captain Cochran and his garrison without further injury.¹

In the meantime Wentworth had done his best to persuade the more conservative element in the town to rally to the support of his Majesty's government. But this proved to be a difficult undertaking. All he could muster were four members of the Council, two justices, one sheriff, his private secretary, Thomas Macdonogh, and his young brother-in-law, Benning Wentworth, who was not yet eighteen years old. The revenue officers were espe-

1. *Parliamentary Register*, i, 101.

cially disappointing, for the Governor had a right to expect that they would uphold the government in which they held offices of trust. But he was mistaken; to use his own words, "all chose to shrink in safety from the storm, and suffered me to remain exposed to the folly and madness of an enraged multitude, daily and hourly increasing in numbers and delusion."¹

The best Wentworth could do was to write immediately to Admiral Graves and Governor Gage, urging them to send "some strong ships of war" to Portsmouth, in order to protect the treasuries of the province and of the custom-house. It is worth remarking, however, that he did not ask for soldiers. On the following day, December 15th, the insurrection continued. On this occasion the disturbance was caused by a party of countrymen led by John Sullivan, a prosperous lawyer of Durham, who had recently represented New Hampshire in the Continental Congress. Two years before this time Wentworth had appointed Sullivan a major in the provincial militia, but this fact did not deter him from turning against the Governor at this critical moment; and although one may be able to justify his participation in the insurrection on the ground of patriotic motives, his methods do not seem to have been quite straightforward. Upon arriving at Portsmouth, he professed to have done all he could to prevail upon his followers to return home, and declared that since there was no certainty that British soldiers would be sent from Boston to take possession of the Castle "he would still use his utmost endeavors to disperse them."

When the affair had reached this point, a committee called upon Governor Wentworth and asked him to promise to pardon, or at least to suspend prosecution against those engaged in the attack upon the Castle. The Governor would make no such promise, but he gave the committee to understand that if the in-

1. *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, xxiii, 277.

surrgents should return the powder and disperse, the government would "consider it an alleviation of the offense." The delegates seemed disposed to adopt this course, and upon leaving Wentworth they went directly to their friends, who voted to return to their homes. It was generally understood that the gunpowder would be restored before morning, and, thus reassured, the Governor assumed that the matter was settled. He was deceived, however, for during the night a party headed by Sullivan, went to the fort and carried away with them sixteen cannon, sixty muskets, and other military stores.¹ On Friday, the 16th, Nathaniel Folsom of Exeter appeared in Portsmouth with a number of armed men, who guarded the captured cannon throughout the day. The latter were soon loaded on flat-bottomed boats, and in the evening the incoming tide helped to carry them to the upper reaches of the Piscataqua where they were distributed among the various towns. The insurgents then melted away, "without having done any personal injury to anybody in the town."

It was rumored that the country people intended to visit Portsmouth again in order to dismantle the fort, carry off or destroy the remaining heavy cannon, and perhaps seize the provincial treasury, but if they actually had any such designs they abandoned them when two armed ships, the *Canceaux* and the *Scarborough*, arrived from Boston. Admiral Graves had responded promptly to Wentworth's call, and one of the ships appeared in the Piscataqua as early as the seventeenth of December. Although the Governor had not asked for soldiers, the vessels brought about one hundred marines, whose advent cannot have been unwelcome to the distressed executive, for within two weeks he asked the Admiral for fifty more. Marines were, of course, vastly preferable to soldiers, since they were quartered on

1. *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, xxiii, 276.

the ships in the harbor and thus, unlike the troops at Boston, were not apt to embroil themselves with the people of the town. At the same time they would be available at a moment's notice if the inhabitants or invading parties from the country became dangerously boisterous.

Now that peace was restored in Portsmouth, it behooved Wentworth to bring the insurgents to justice. Inwardly he had small expectation of success in this attempt to maintain the dignity of his Majesty's government, but the attempt must be made, nevertheless. On the day after Christmas, therefore, he issued a solemn proclamation ordering all magistrates to exert themselves to detect and arrest the offenders, and warning the people not to screen them from justice.¹ That he anticipated few if any good results from this general exhortation is indicated in one of his letters to Lord Dartmouth. "With regard to bringing any of them to punishment," he wrote, "the very transaction shows that there is not strength in the government to effect it in its present state. No jail would hold them long, and no jury would find them guilty, for by the false alarm that has been raised through the country it is considered by the weak and the ignorant, who have the rule in these times, an act of self-preservation."² There was, however, a bare chance that a sudden reaction might occur, and, if this should prove to be the case, Wentworth wished to take full advantage of it.

Weeks passed, but no information was given against those implicated in the two attacks on the Castle. The proclamation was wholly without effect. The Governor, however, knew the names of the leaders and was determined in one way or another to bring them to condign punishment. Under the existing conditions the arrest of John Langdon, John Sullivan, Nathaniel Folsom, or any

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 423-424.

2. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth*, December 20, 1774.

other person concerned in the recent insurrection, would have been followed inevitably by an uprising of the populace and by the violent release of the prisoners. The only feasible method of preventing lawlessness in Portsmouth was to station British troops there. For Wentworth's purpose the militia were worse than useless. When he called them out to protect the Castle not a man responded. The only alternative was the employment of a regiment or two of Gage's regulars. Towards the end of January, therefore, the Governor broke the second rule in his code for successful government and asked General Gage to station two regiments at Portsmouth.¹ At first it seemed probable that the General would acquiesce. He sent Captain Gamble to Portsmouth to look over the ground and to view the buildings which Wentworth thought could be easily converted into barracks. Upon Gamble's return, however, Gage informed the Governor that he could not spare any troops from Massachusetts, and that with the aid of the ships already sent to the Piscataqua, Wentworth must shift for himself.

Meanwhile Wentworth had done what he could to organize those who still adhered to his Majesty's government. Early in January stories were abroad concerning a plot to seize the Governor and other officers of the Crown, by way of reprisal, if any of the Boston or Portsmouth ringleaders should be arrested. Timidity was no part of Wentworth's nature, but his sense of dignity obliged him to guard against the possibility of being captured by the popular party. Without much difficulty he formed an association of about fifty men, upon whom he could rely in case of an attack upon his person or property. He could not, however, expect this bodyguard to assist him in any attempt to arrest the leading perpetrators of the affair at the Castle; they must be dealt with in some other manner. Some of the offenders were

1. *John Wentworth to General Gage*, January 21, 1775.

magistrates and militia officers appointed by the Governor, and to Wentworth it seemed indecent that these "popular, perjured men" should be allowed to continue to hold their commissions after being implicated in such a lawless enterprise. As fast as he could find loyal citizens to take their places, therefore, he dismissed them from the service. Among them were Sullivan and Folsom.¹ This courageous purge naturally increased the Governor's unpopularity and "produced menaces of disorder, etc., which," wrote Wentworth, "I mind no further than to arm my house well and associate about sixty good men, with whom I am resolved to give all that presume to venture a very warm and serious entertainment."²

On January 25, a second revolutionary convention met at Exeter and elected Sullivan and Langdon to represent New Hampshire in the Continental Congress at Philadelphia. If Wentworth had been in need of any additional evidence of the attitude of the people towards the attack on the Castle, this action on the part of their representatives at Exeter must have been convincing. Disheartened by the trend of events, but filled with charity for his fellowmen, he wrote to Thomas Westbrook Waldron, "I wish the parties would leave ground for an amnesty; but they strive to augment the reverse. Peace, my dear friend, has by unwise men been driven out. They shut the door against its return. God forgive them. They know not what they do. Many of them, I verily believe, are innocently wicked. It seems contradictory, but madness can no otherwise be expressed. Our hemisphere threatens an hurricane. I've in vain strove almost to death to prevent it. If I can bring out of it, at last, safety to my country and honor to our sovereign, my labor will be joyful."³

1. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth*, March 10, 1775.

2. *John Wentworth to Henry Bellew*, April 8, 1775.

3. *Massachusetts Historical Society's Collections*, Sixth Series, iv, 74.

The Assembly was due to meet on the twenty-eighth of February, but when the Governor learned that a number of the members elected had been conspicuous principals in the attack on the fort he postponed their coming together until the fourth of May, in the hope of seeing at least the ringleaders in jail before that time.¹ Probably, too, he thought that in the intervening months Parliament might adopt conciliatory measures which would restore harmony to the British empire. Assuredly nothing was to be lost by waiting. But, as it turned out, matters went from bad to worse. In increasing numbers the conservative people in the rural districts were tormented by their radical neighbors, and many were obliged to flee to Boston for shelter, — "Portsmouth not being considered a place of safety." Among the first victims was Wentworth's friend, Benjamin Thompson, later Count Rumford, who hurriedly left his home in Concord and returned to his birthplace in Massachusetts. Doubtless Thompson was conservative in his sympathies, but his specific crime seems to have been nothing worse than inducing deserters from the British army to return to their regiments. His method of persuasion, which he devised in collaboration with the Governor, was as ingenious as it was effective: whenever a deserter appeared at his door, Thompson hired him as a farm hand and thus virtually sentenced him to an indefinite term of hard labor. When, after a week or two, the man was so thoroughly weary that he longed for the life he had known in the army, his master would prevail upon him to return to the colors and could assure him of full pardon if he did so. According to Wentworth, many thus rejoined their regiments, and with ideas of farm life that would effectually deter others from trying, or themselves from repeating, the experiment.²

1. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth*, March 10, 1775.

2. *John Wentworth to General Gage*, November 2, 1774; also *John Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham*, November 9, 1774.

In April, a slight rift in the clouds appeared. Parliament's decision to attempt conciliation with America became known in the land. The remedial measures suggested were not likely to satisfy the colonists, to be sure, but they were a step in the right direction and Wentworth was prepared to do his utmost to induce the approaching Assembly to accept them as a compromise. Although he was not especially sanguine of the result, whatever hopes he entertained were soon dashed by General Gage's imprudent decision to seize the stores of powder at Concord, Massachusetts.

The fights at Lexington and Concord created much excitement in New Hampshire, and about twelve hundred men from the southern part of the province immediately marched to Cambridge, the headquarters of the American forces. But, if Wentworth's information was correct, when it became clear that Gage was not likely to repeat his experiment, all except two hundred returned to their homes.¹ While some were busy with this march and counter-march, others talked loudly of seizing the Governor, and of destroying the men-of-war in the harbor. No serious outbreak occurred, however. More productive were the efforts of the Provincial Congress at Exeter. The deputies, convened there towards the end of May, voted to raise two thousand men who should enlist for the rest of the year. These formed three New Hampshire regiments, two of which distinguished themselves at Bunker Hill, a few weeks later.

In the midst of this excitement and confusion the Assembly met at Portsmouth, and was asked by the Governor to give its attention to the conciliatory proposals recently made by Parliament.² The members, however, were more interested in contesting the right of three of their number to represent the towns for which

1. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth*, April 26, 1775; May 17, 1775.

2. *Ibid.*, May 12, 1775.

they sat, and almost their first act was to appoint a committee to investigate the situation. Then they pleaded the necessity of consulting their constituents before considering the business which the Governor had urged upon them. In reply Wentworth suggested that under the existing conditions they might serve the people better by doing their thinking for them than by attempting to find guidance in the popular "fears and jealousies." This was a good point, but it did not appeal to those who heard it, and upon a second petition the Governor indulgently adjourned the Assembly to the twelfth day of June. After all, nothing could have been gained by forcing the members to continue to sit; and it was possible that during the next six weeks political events might take a more favorable turn.

By precipitating armed hostilities with the Americans, General Gage was largely responsible for the unfavorable circumstances under which the governor of New Hampshire had been obliged to meet his Assembly in early May. Now Admiral Graves did the patriot cause a like service by making the British government still more unpopular, shortly before the House came together in June. One day late in May, H.M.S. *Scarborough*, which was stationed in the Piscataqua, stopped two vessels that were coming to Portsmouth laden with provisions. These Captain Barkley was about to send to Boston as prizes when Governor Wentworth came aboard to protest. According to Wentworth, the cargoes, consisting of corn, pork, flour, and other foodstuffs, were greatly needed by the poor of Portsmouth, and he begged the Captain to release them. A delegation of citizens had waited upon the Governor and had assured him that if the provisions were not allowed to be brought to town they would not answer for the consequences.¹ Already the news of the seizure had spread through

1. Peter Force's *American Archives*, Fourth Series, ii, 740-741; also *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 376-377.

the country and armed bodies of men were moving towards Portsmouth. But Barkley replied that he was under orders to capture all provision vessels and to send them to Boston for the supply of the British army and navy, which, in this case, he did without further delay.

Retribution was not far distant. On the night of May 30, "a large body of men, about six or seven hundred, went to a part of Castle Island called Jerry's Point — about a mile from the fort — and thence brought to town, early the next morning, eight pieces of cannon, six twenty-four and two thirty-two pounders."¹ Just what the insurgents had in mind is not clear, but it is probable that they intended to plant a battery within range of the frigate and thus to drive her out of the harbor. Bodies of armed men continued to pour into Portsmouth all the next day. They made themselves very much at home in the capital, ransacked several private houses for powder and arms, and kept the town in a continual state of confusion and alarm. Some thought of rummaging the Governor's house, but when refused admission they went on their way.

In the meantime Captain Barkley made matters worse by removing seamen from fishing vessels, bound in or out of the harbor, and by adding them to his own command. This appropriation of a part of the crew sometimes made it impossible for a fishing schooner to go to sea, and indirectly threatened the food supply of Portsmouth. Once more most of the citizens turned to Wentworth in their distress, while others, preferring a more direct method of redress, lay in ambush behind a fence on "Castle Island" and took shots at one of the *Scarborough's* boats which was patrolling the shore. The latter incident, while unfortunate in some respects, was really a blessing, for its emphatic disavowal by the better class of people made it possible for Went-

1. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth*, June 3, 1775.

worth to talk persuasively to Barkley about the impressment of the fishermen. As a result, the situation was cleared up very satisfactorily: the town declared its abhorrence of the sniping episode and its readiness to attempt to bring the offenders to justice, whereupon Barkley granted Wentworth's request and released the fishermen. When this was done, the insurgents soon dispersed, and comparative quiet settled once more over Portsmouth.¹

The adjourned Assembly met on the twelfth of June, but did not consider any business until the following day. Then, instead of arguing the merits and demerits of Parliament's conciliatory proposals, as Wentworth wished, the leaders of the House brought up the question of the right of the three members to represent the towns for which they sat. This business, it will be remembered, had been referred to a committee before the adjournment. The point at issue was whether the Governor had the constitutional right to empower new towns to send representatives to Portsmouth without the consent of the Assembly. Wentworth considered that this power was vested in him, and consequently he had sent writs to three new towns, Plymouth, Lyme, and Orford, authorizing each to send a deputy to the present Assembly, — which they did. The committee now reported that although there had been some instances of "suffering members so sent to take their seats without taking any notice of the impropriety thereof," it was none the less an encroachment on the rights and privileges of the House. The Assembly, having heard the report, voted that the three members concerned were not entitled to their seats.²

On a strict analogy to the British constitution the legislators were probably right, for during the previous half-century the

1. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth*, June 3, 1775.

2. *New Hampshire State Papers*, vii, 378.

sovereign in England had not added members to Parliament. This lapse had gradually constituted a prohibition, but whether this diminution of the royal prerogative had extended to the colonies was an open question. About 1750 Benning Wentworth had beaten the Assembly into submission on this point, and since that contest the King had disallowed a provincial act which sought to establish a different basis of representation.¹ Unfortunately, however, there was no explicit clause in the Governor's commission to which the executive could point and thus settle the question which was now resurrected to trouble his administration. The real cause behind this move on the part of the Assembly was not political but personal, and if the representative returned by the town of Plymouth had not been Colonel Fenton it is doubtful if the legislators would have questioned his right to sit in their midst.

John Fenton, originally of Ireland, was an officer in the British army in the Seven Years' War and had the good fortune to win the hand of Elizabeth Temple, a daughter of Robert Temple of Ten Hills Farm. These Temples of Charlestown and Boston were a branch of the aristocratic English family bearing the same name. As of right, therefore, they assumed a high place in colonial society, and since William Pitt and George Grenville were closely connected with the Temples in England it was quite natural that young John Temple should be appointed surveyor general of his Majesty's customs in the northern district of America, and lieutenant-governor of New Hampshire. The latter office was a sinecure, but he who performed the thankless task of supervising the revenue service in New York and New England was surely entitled to whatever additional compensations might fall to his lot. After the war Captain Fenton found himself placed on half

1. For a detailed account of this controversy, see William Henry Fry's *New Hampshire as a Royal Province*, pp. 154-165.

pay and looked about for some other source of income. His brother-in-law provided him with a position in the custom house at Albany, but Fenton seems to have spent most of his time in the pleasant society of his wife's friends in Boston. In 1771 he purchased a comfortable farm in Charlestown with the apparent intention of spending the remainder of his days there; then, quite suddenly, he moved to New Hampshire, where Wentworth had granted him three thousand acres in the Pemigewasset Valley in accordance with the King's Proclamation of October 7, 1763. In the township of Plymouth, which was not far from this splendid tract, he bought more land and erected a commodious dwelling, much as Wentworth had done at Wolfeborough.¹ So it came about that the people of Plymouth, in February, 1775, elected him to represent them in the provincial Assembly.

Soon after Fenton's arrival in New Hampshire, John Wentworth, who had conceived a strong liking for the man, appointed him a colonel in the militia, clerk of the Court of Common Pleas, and judge of probate for the County of Grafton. Furthermore, he found in him a reliable friend to himself and to the government. It will be remembered, perhaps, that Colonel Fenton was one of the gentlemen who guarded the tea on the eve of its departure for Halifax. Without doubt he was one of the few magistrates and friends who rallied to the Governor's support at the time of the attack on the fort, for in a postscript to his letter to General Gage immediately after that unpleasant incident Wentworth wrote, "If I had had two hundred such men, the Castle and all therein would yet have been safe." Moreover, Fenton did not hesitate either to assert his loyalty or to denounce the folly of the people who engaged in such uprisings. In consequence, he became a target for the populace. One cannot but admire his

1. Ezra S. Stearns's *History of Plymouth, New Hampshire*, i, 69; also *Notes of Mr. Daniel Parker Coke, M. P.* (edited by H. E. Egerton), p. 194.

courage and his devotion to Wentworth, but his political sense was a quality not so highly developed. Probably he had the best of motives when he addressed an open letter to the people of the County of Grafton, advising them to stay on their farms and dissuading them from joining the insurgents at Cambridge; but since it appeared just a week after the clash at Lexington and Concord, the Provincial Congress considered it propaganda of a highly dangerous nature.¹ When called to account by the powers at Exeter, Colonel Fenton wrote an unsatisfactory explanation, declined to appear before the Congress, and discreetly withdrew on board the *Scarborough*. It was not unnatural, therefore, for the opposition members of the Assembly to seize upon any pretext for unseating him when they met in June, and for the populace to resolve that he should be captured and brought before the authorities at Exeter.

The measure disqualifying Fenton to represent the town of Plymouth was passed on the morning of June 13. That afternoon the unpopular gentleman, who had attended the morning session

1. *To the People of the County of Grafton, from a real friend who sincerely wishes their well-being:*

For God's sake pay the closest attention to the sowing and planting your lands, and do as much of it as possible, not only for your own and families' subsistence, but to supply the wants of your fellowmen down country; for you may be assured that every kind of distress, in the provision way, is coming upon them.

Let nothing induce you to quit your farming business — mind no reports — there are enough without you — therefore your diligence in farming will much more serve your country than coming to assist us. Much depends on the back settlements' raising plenty of grain.

I am informed that if the people of the back settlements take up arms a number of Indians and Canadians will fall upon them, but that if they remain quiet, they will not. This I inform you of from the love I bear you, and give it you as a sincere friend should do.

JOHN FENTON

Portsm^o, 26th April 1775.

of the Assembly, called on Governor Wentworth at his home on Pleasant Street. Mr. Fenton was on his way to the man-of-war in the harbor which, for the time being, he had adopted as his place of residence; and although there had been frequent menaces on the part of the populace he had no special reason to anticipate violence on this afternoon. Soon after he arrived, however, "the house was surrounded by large multitudes of men under arms," who shouted to Fenton to surrender. The situation looked serious. Wentworth sent out a call for his bodyguard, but there was no response. Meanwhile the numbers and the threats of the mob increased. A cannon appeared in the street, and, after it had been pointed at the door of the house, immediate destruction was promised if Fenton failed to come forth. At last Fenton came.¹

In the evening, while the insurgents escorted their prisoner on his way to Exeter, Governor Wentworth and his household fled from their comfortable home and took refuge within the walls of the fort, which, though dilapidated, lay under the protecting guns of H.M.S. *Scarborough*.

1. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth*, June 14, 1775; *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, xxiii, 277-278.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN EXILE

“THIS at present is our case, confined on the ocean’s edge and experiencing the inconveniences resulting from the misguided zeal of those upon whose gratitude and affection I rejoice to have the justest demand. I will not complain, because it would be a poignant censure on a people I love and forgive. For truly I can say with the poet in his *Lear*, ‘I am a man more sinned against than sinning.’”¹ So reflected John Wentworth, as he sat in his miserable quarters at Fort William and Mary one July day in 1775. The “small incommodious house” that sheltered him and his family was “neither wind nor water tight.” Indeed, it was scarcely habitable, but its situation afforded comparative safety, and the Governor protected himself from a surprise attack by dividing his scanty bodyguard into three watches of four hours each. The garrison of the fort consisted of only six men; Wentworth’s three servants brought the number up to nine; and his youthful brother-in-law, Benning, and Captain Cochran completed the loyal group, who in an emergency could do little except give an alarm and thus perhaps afford their chief sufficient time to escape to the frigate anchored nearby.²

Wentworth besought Admiral Graves to send another ship to the Piscataqua; but when the *Falcon* and her convoy arrived he wished they had stayed away, for they came with orders to dismantle the Castle of all ordnance and stores, and so merely

1. *John Wentworth to Tristram Dalton*, July 31, 1775.

2. *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, xxiii, 278.

increased the difficulty of his situation. In spite of all this adversity, the Governor seems to have retained his sense of humor, for he was able to write in a merry vein about his infant son, scarce six months old, who, in this strange environment bade fair "to make a good fisherman and perhaps a good gunner." Nevertheless, Wentworth was really weighed down with anxieties both personal and official. It was hardly reassuring, for instance, to learn that the house at Wolfeborough, although still standing, had been ransacked by a party of marauders who could have burned it to the ground had they not been dissuaded by two elderly men among them.¹ Neither was it encouraging to hear that the Provincial Congress had taken possession of almost all the public records of New Hampshire and had carried them off to Exeter. The Assembly, which the Governor had adjourned immediately after the unseating of Colonel Fenton, met on the eleventh of July. Wentworth sent a message urging the members to reconsider the question of excluding the representatives from Plymouth, Orford, and Lyme; but when it became evident that a disrespectful reply was to be the only result of his efforts, he adjourned the Assembly once more, — this time until the twenty-eighth day of September.

Matters dragged along in this desultory fashion until the middle of August, when a misunderstanding between Captain Barkley and the people of Portsmouth produced a new crisis. It will be remembered that after some unpleasantness late in May the captain of the *Scarborough* and the townspeople had made an informal agreement not to starve each other out, the ship being dependent upon access to the shore for its supply of beef, and Portsmouth being correspondingly dependent upon the immunity of its fishing vessels. It was a curious *modus vivendi* between hostile parties, but in July, 1775, who could say whether America

1. *John Wentworth to Timothy Ruggles*, July 3, 1775.

and Britain were at war? Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill gave an affirmative answer, yet there had been no formal declaration, and the duration of hostilities was wholly uncertain. So Captain Barkley and the people of Portsmouth made this convenient arrangement, which worked well enough until a fishing smack sailed up the harbor with a cargo of dried fish which had been taken aboard at the neighboring town of Rye. Barkley chose to believe that the vessel had come from the Banks, and since New Englanders had been excluded from those fisheries by a recent act of Parliament he seized the schooner and moored her under the guns of the man-of-war. Naturally the townspeople felt great resentment and wished redress. Wentworth did his best to reconcile the parties, and succeeded fairly well, but Barkley seemed determined to cause a rupture. One evening early in August a man from the *Scarborough* escaped from the ship's boat, which had been sent up to the town, and disappeared. The Captain was convinced that the people of Portsmouth were harboring the deserter. On the following morning, therefore, he took one Mead, an American fisherman, "out of a canoe passing by the ship," and sent word to the town that he would not release him until the deserter was returned. This was more than the Portsmouthians could endure. They declared that the charge that they had encouraged the desertion was utterly false and that Barkley had broken the agreement. Consequently, if he should send the ship's boat to town again they would not hesitate to seize it.

Barkley released his captive, but the unrest in Portsmouth did not at once subside. On August 10th, in Wentworth's presence, the Captain was again cautioned against risking an encounter with the populace. That very afternoon, however, he sent a boat to land, and excitement in abundance followed. The coxswain was captured by a crowd of Americans and the rest of the crew were

fired upon from the shore. They returned the fire as well as they could and then withdrew to the *Scarborough*, minus their coxswain. According to Wentworth, this episode was the work of "the lower class," and he was probably right for at a town meeting, which was called immediately afterwards, a majority of the citizens disavowed the deed and that evening sent a copy of the vote, together with the coxswain, to Barkley. Offhand one would say that the score was now even, but the Captain did not take that view. He demanded that the Governor make an investigation, which Wentworth did, — not in person, to be sure, but through his Council. Their report that the town was sincere in its disavowal did not satisfy Barkley, however. He insisted that the Governor must bring the perpetrators to justice; if not, he would move his man-of-war up the Piscataqua and wreak vengeance on the whole town.¹

Wentworth's patience was almost exhausted, but he kept his temper and played his cards carefully. Obviously it was impossible for him to discover and arrest the lawless individuals; on the other hand, if the *Scarborough* moved up-stream he and his slender bodyguard would be at the mercy of the insurgents. To argue with Barkley was not easy, but Wentworth enlarged upon the difficulties of navigation which were certain to be encountered by a man-of-war if it proceeded farther up the Piscataqua, and ultimately prevailed upon him not to carry his threat into execution. Meanwhile the Portsmouth Committee of Safety decided that the time had come to sever relations with the *Scarborough*, and on the thirteenth day of August an edict went forth forbidding communication with the frigate and with the Castle, except by permission from the revolutionary authorities.

Barkley was now confronted with starvation, and told Wentworth that his ship would have to go to Boston for supplies.

1. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth*, August 18, 1775.

Wentworth tried to dissuade him by calling his attention to the fact that without the protection of the *Scarborough* his present abode was no refuge at all. The Captain could not deny it, but would not yield to his plea. The only course, then, was for the Governor and his household to go aboard the man-of-war and depart with it.¹ To this Wentworth reluctantly consented, and on the twenty-third of August, H.M.S. *Scarborough* bore them out of the Piscataqua, upon whose swirling tide the Governor gazed for the last time. Within a half-hour from the time of his withdrawal, a party of Americans demolished the undefended Castle and wrecked the humble dwelling contained within its walls.

When John Wentworth accepted Barkley's invitation to join him on a cruise to Boston, he fancied that the frigate, and he with it, would return to Portsmouth as soon as she was stocked with food. But when he arrived at Boston he discovered that Admiral Graves had other uses for the *Scarborough*. This was awkward, for the Assembly stood summoned to meet on the twenty-eighth of September, and since it was clear that he would be unable to open the session in person the Governor wished to avoid humiliation by proroguing the meeting in advance. Legally he could issue the necessary proclamation only when within the limits of the province. And where, unless supported by a man-of-war, could he rest his foot on New Hampshire soil without risk of being captured, a calamity which would complete the downfall of the royal government? With considerable relief, no doubt, he remembered a group of islands lying a few miles southeast of the mouth of the Piscataqua, the Isles of Shoals. About half of these belonged to New Hampshire, and thither he determined to go.

In a small armed schooner, appropriately named the *Hope*, Wentworth and his secretary, Thomas Macdonogh, sailed quietly

1. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth*, August 29, 1775.

out of Boston Harbor and in the course of time found themselves at the fishing hamlet of Gosport in the Isles of Shoals. So far all had gone well. On the night of the twenty-fifth of September the Governor sent a boat to the mainland with the proclamation. The messenger, who was probably the devoted Macdonogh, reached Portsmouth in safety, delivered the document to Theodore Atkinson, the senior member of the Council, and that same night returned to his chief. For some reason Wentworth sent another boat to the town on the following morning and waited all that day and most of the morrow for its return; but it came not back. Taking it for granted that "it was detained by the people with hostile intentions" and remembering that his own vessel was but slightly armed, he ordered the anchor up and cruised back to Boston, well pleased with the success of his expedition.¹

In the autumn of 1775, Boston, besieged by the American army, was not a very comfortable place of residence, and the prospect for the winter was by no means reassuring. "It is much to be feared," wrote the Governor, "the garrison and town will suffer for want of fuel, forage and other necessities, unless a great supply arrives soon from Britain or Ireland. Money is so scarce that bills are 17½% under par. Fresh meat sells at a quarter of a dollar per pound. Fresh fish, scarce any. In short, all things wear a most gloomy aspect indeed."² Wentworth still clung to his scheme of returning to New Hampshire under the protection of a man-of-war or two, but to his frequent solicitations the Admiral always replied that he could not spare any ships for that purpose. So the long, dreary winter dragged by, and, as it passed, two things became perfectly clear to John Wentworth. The first

1. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth*, September 28, 1775.

2. *John Wentworth to the Marquis of Rockingham*, October 10, 1775; in the "British Transcripts" in the Library of Congress, LC 223, P.R.O. C.O.5, 134:15g.

was that the Americans, whatever might have been their original intentions, now aimed at "total independence of Great Britain"; the second was that the sooner Mrs. Wentworth and their infant son left Boston, the better it would be for all concerned. Mrs. Wentworth had received many invitations from friends in England, and whatever hesitancy she may have felt at first about accepting them was gradually overcome by Boston's lack of fuel and scarcity of fresh provisions. On the nineteenth of January, therefore, she and her babe sailed for England on the *Julius Caesar*,¹ leaving the Governor to await the outcome of the siege.

The command of the British troops in America had been taken away from General Gage and was now administered by General William Howe. Although the price paid for Bunker Hill ought to have impressed Howe with the advisability of possessing and fortifying every unoccupied hill that commanded the town and harbor, he did not exert himself in this direction, nor in any other for that matter, until too late. One morning in March, 1776, he awoke to find the Americans in possession of Dorchester Heights, and Boston in immediate danger of bombardment. Either the Yankees must be dislodged or the British must evacuate the town; and when the former course proved impracticable General Howe hastily prepared for the only alternative. Wentworth now had reason to rejoice that his lady and his son had already crossed the ocean; for the town was filled with Loyalists who were frantic at the thought of being left behind to face the victorious American army. The Governor was fortunate in being able to engage a schooner, the *Resource*, to transport his remaining household, himself, and a score of other Loyalists to Halifax. The most congenial member of this little company of refugees was the Reverend Dr. Caner, the rector of King's Chapel, whom Wentworth termed "the oldest and most respectable Church of Eng-

1. *John Wentworth to James Monk*, February 12, 1776.

land clergyman in New England.”¹ Sadly they sailed away to Nova Scotia, whence in the course of a few months the Governor, young Benning Wentworth, and Thomas Macdonogh accompanied the fleet and the army to Long Island.

The winter of 1776-1777 was less discouraging than its predecessor had been. Howe had made an easy conquest of New York, and there were other indications that the Americans were getting tired of the war. Wentworth, at Flatbush, heard now and then from his friends in New Hampshire, who assured him that there were plenty of men in that part of the country who would gladly combine with his Majesty's troops and suppress the rebellion if a force of British soldiers should appear there. Of course some people, like John Langdon, were getting rich from privateering and from ship-building contracts, and these persons, naturally enough, kept up an evil spirit among the populace; but on the whole New Hampshire was weary enough of the struggle.² Such were the reports which came to Wentworth, and he was not disinclined to believe them. Perhaps Burgoyne's impending invasion from Canada would not only provide the requisite rallying point for New Hampshire loyalism, but would even end the war. But Burgoyne's campaign accomplished exactly the reverse. It stimulated the New Hampshire countrymen to unusual martial efforts — as at Bennington, for example — and the ultimate surrender at Saratoga proved conclusively that the Americans had got their second wind. Obviously the end of the war was not yet at hand. Early in the year 1777, the government had given Wentworth permission to come to England whenever he saw fit. Since it was now clear that the war would continue indefinitely, he abandoned his persistent hope of accompanying an expeditionary force to New Hampshire, and in February, 1778, sailed for

1. *John Wentworth to the Earl of Dartmouth*, March 18, 1776.

2. *John Wentworth to Lord George Germain*, January 6, 1777.

England. After a voyage of twenty-four days¹ London was a welcome sight, for to Wentworth it meant reunion with his family.

Mrs. Wentworth and Charles-Mary had fared very well since their departure from Boston two years before. Lord and Lady Rockingham had proved themselves friends indeed, and had done all things possible for their comfort in a strange land. The Marquis even insisted that his tiny namesake should be assigned to the apartments which he himself had occupied at that tender age. Another good friend was Paul Wentworth, whose austere country residence, Brandenburg House, at Hammersmith, was a second home to John for the next five years. Paul's loyalty to the Governor at the time of the Livius accusations was now equaled by his devotion to the British government in the American war. Unlike his New Hampshire kinsman, this Mr. Wentworth had little sympathy with the cause of the colonists, and less patience with their methods. When war broke out, therefore, he gave abundantly of his time and energy to the British government. At first in France and later in the Netherlands he watched closely the movements of the American agents and reported in cipher to Lord North whatever information he considered useful or valuable.

The Prime Minister held his services in high esteem, but George III did not share this sentiment. The King insisted that Paul Wentworth was "a dabbler in the Alley" and "an avowed stock-jobber," whose primary motive was to promote his own interests or those of the Governor.² The royal prejudice was probably due to Mr. Wentworth's oft-repeated conviction that France would enter the war on the side of the Americans, an unpleasant event which the King refused to anticipate. Arthur Lee, one of the

1. P. O. Hutchinson's *Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson*, ii, 192.

2. W. B. Donne's *Correspondences of King George the Third with Lord North*, ii, 84, 90, 109.

American commissioners in Europe during the Revolution, made perhaps a more discerning estimate of Paul Wentworth, "who," he wrote, "from his attempts upon me I know to be a most subtle tool of corruption."¹ John Adams, too, disliked having Paul Wentworth about. Towards the end of the war he encountered him in the Netherlands, where the gentleman from England was making informal arrangements for a treaty of peace between the Dutch and his government. And after the independence of the United States had been recognized by Great Britain, Adams complained that Paul Wentworth and others in London were busy "making a party unfriendly to us," and with considerable success.² But lest one carry away an unfavorable impression of John Wentworth's "most intimate, dearest and confidential friend," it is only fair to add that he was an early benefactor of Dartmouth College, and that the publication of the Holland Map of New Hampshire in 1784 was due to his interest and generosity.³

Not long after his arrival in England Governor Wentworth had occasion to cross the Channel and to spend a few days in Paris. It so happened that at that time his classmate, John Adams, was likewise at the French capital, as a member of the American commission which included Benjamin Franklin. The fact that war existed between England and France seems to have been no impediment to Wentworth's going and coming, and by chance he and Adams sought entertainment at the Comédie Française on the same evening. The story of their meeting is best told in the self-conscious commissioner's own words.

As I was coming out of the box, after the representation, a gentleman seized me by the hand. I looked at him. "Governor Wentworth, sir," said the gentleman. At first, I was somewhat embarrassed, and

1. New York Historical Society's *Collections*, xxii, 99.

2. *Ibid.*, xxiii, 184.

3. Chase's *History of Dartmouth College*, pp. 572-574; Belknap's *History of New Hampshire*, iii, 14.

knew not how to behave towards him. As my classmate, and friend at college, and ever since, I could have pressed him to my bosom with most cordial affection. But we now belonged to two different nations at war with each other, and, consequently, we were enemies. Both the governor and the minister were probably watched by the spies of the police, and our interview would be known the next morning at Versailles. The governor, however, relieved me from my reverie, by asking me questions concerning his father and friends in America, which I answered according to my knowledge. He then inquired after the health of Dr. Franklin, and said he must come out to Passy, and pay his compliments to him. He should not dare to see the Marquis of Rockingham, after his return, without making a visit to Dr. Franklin. Accordingly, in a day or two, he came and made us a morning visit. Dr. Franklin and I received him together; but there was no conversation but upon trifles. The governor's motives for this trip to Paris, and visit to Passy, I never knew. If they bore any resemblance to those of Mr. Hartley, his deportment and language were very different. Not an indelicate expression to us, or our country, or our ally, escaped him. His whole behavior was that of an accomplished gentleman.¹

The greater part of his time Wentworth spent in and about London, where he found many of his American friends and acquaintances among the homesick, exiled Loyalists. Like the rest of them, the Governor probably found London a very expensive place of residence, in which his pension of £600 per annum was a quite insufficient source of revenue; but thanks to the Marquis of Rockingham and to opulent Paul Wentworth, he and his family fared better than most of their countrymen.

In January, 1776, the revolutionary congress at Exeter, owing to "the sudden and abrupt departure of his Excellency John Wentworth, Esq., our late governor, and several of the council," which left the province "destitute of legislation," framed a constitution. Not being quite certain whether New Hampshire was a province or a state, they chose the equivocal term "colony." Under this constitution the people of New Hampshire governed

1. John Adams's *Works*, iii, 150.

themselves, first as a colony and later as a state, throughout the war. Among the many problems which confronted the government thus established, the most vexatious was that of financing the state. In the autumn of 1777 the Continental Congress recommended that relief be attempted by the confiscation and sale of the real and personal property of Loyalists. There were many Americans who considered such a course not only unjust but even contrary to the common laws of war; but in financial desperation New Hampshire, like her sister states, accepted the recommendation and undertook the disagreeable task in a businesslike manner. First, the Legislature passed an act forbidding about seventy-five persons, who for one reason or another had left New Hampshire, to return to the state without leave from the government. The penalty for the first offense was deportation; for the second, death; and the first name on the list was that of John Wentworth.¹

Having disposed of the persons of the Loyalists, the Legislature now turned its attention to the property of the most conspicuous among them. In accordance with the general policy adopted, most of Wentworth's personal effects were confiscated and some were sold at auction at Exeter; but greatly to its credit the Legislature passed a special vote exempting the furniture of his Portsmouth house and the family portraits at Wolfeborough, which were turned over to his father.² His real estate, comprising

1. *New Hampshire State Papers*, viii, 810.

2. *Ibid.*, viii, 822, 857. In connection with this confiscation one cannot but feel a degree of sympathy for Dr. Joshua Brackett of Portsmouth, who wrote to Jeremy Belknap: "I saw in the Exeter paper an advertisement of books belonging to the estate of the late G r Wentworth, to be sold at auction. I have one among them (*Tissott on Health*). My name, I think, is wrote in it, and I lent it him for his use while at Wentworth House. By claiming it for me the day before the sale, you'll greatly oblige your friend & hble. servt." *Massachusetts Historical Society's Collections*, Sixth Series, iv, 136.

about twenty thousand acres in various parts of New Hampshire, was gradually liquidated by the official trustee, Captain Samuel Gilman, and the proceeds were paid to the receiver general.¹

Probably few events in his life caused Wentworth more acute suffering than the confiscation of his beloved plantation at Wolfeborough, but the spirit in which he faced and accepted it was characteristic of the man. "By the last refugees from Portsmouth and Boston," he wrote, "I hear of an attempt or intention to sell my estate in New Hampshire, and also of some measures against the late Mr. Packer's will in my behalf. For myself, I am prepared to meet any event, that can happen to me, with becoming patience and fortitude: but should it fall into the hands of Mr. W. L.,² as his friends here intimate is intended, I believe the poor inhabitants through the County of Strafford will have no cause to rejoice in the change. God knows my heart sought and indulged its greatest delight and even vanity in their comfort and growing prosperity. Extensive as my property is, no man can say his was diminished thereby. On the contrary, it is a cordial that no power can deprive me of, that many, very many, must feel — and their inmost souls in secret acknowledge — the reverse; nor do I in the least repent the expense it cost me, conscious then and satisfied now, that though my means was not equal to dry up the rough sea of human difficulties and distress, — yet to their utmost they were applied in assisting my brethren in their passage over. Whoever may possess my seat at W[olfeborough], I charge him not to disgrace its name by turning the lingering feet of the children of calamity, uncomforted from that door, whose hinges will gladly extend to receive such friends of the founder. As to any

1. *Second Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario*, 1, 507–512, 616–617. See also *New Hampshire Gazette*, April 22 and August 19, 1780.

2. Woodbury Langdon.

other claim of mine, my heart is not anxious, but I confess it would grieve me to have that estate made the means of oppression. In such case, and in such only, should I regret my cost and labor thereon.”¹

The Governor's fear that his enemy, Woodbury Langdon, would come into possession of Wentworth House was not realized. In 1781 Andrew Cabot of Beverly, who had become rich through privateering during the war, invested some of his newly gotten wealth in the famous farm at Wolfeborough.² Apparently he and his brother John aspired to be country gentlemen, — for a few months in the year at least. Together they acquired the neighboring tracts of land in Middleton until their combined holdings formed a magnificent estate; but the death of Andrew Cabot in 1791 seems to have destroyed his brother's interest in their joint agricultural enterprise, and before long it passed into other hands.

The confiscation and liquidation of Wentworth's property in New Hampshire brought over £10,000 into the treasury, but as the estate was burdened with debts amounting to £18,000 or more, the net proceeds, as far as the government was concerned, were zero. The Governor's father, Mark Hunking Wentworth, was the largest creditor, and being also a true aristocrat, he magnanimously withdrew his claim to the £13,000 due him until the other creditors had been paid in full.³

1. *John Wentworth to John Peirce*, August 30, 1779; in the "Masonian Papers," vol. iii ("Peirce Manuscripts"), folio 51, in the state archives at Concord, New Hampshire.

2. *Strafford County Registry of Deeds*, vol. iv, p. 42. The conveyance is dated February 1, 1781. The price paid was 354,470 pounds Continental currency, which in 1781 was the equivalent of about £9000. For more information concerning the Cabots of Beverly, see Henry Cabot Lodge's *Life and Letters of George Cabot*, pp. 13-14. Andrew and John Cabot were great-great-uncles of the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts.

3. Belknap's *History of New Hampshire*, ii, 433-434.

In the meantime the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown had dislodged Lord North's cabinet, which was supplanted in March, 1782, by a Whig ministry with the Marquis of Rockingham at its head. The political cards could not have been shuffled more favorably for John Wentworth. Although the friendly Marquis died in the following July, it is reasonable to suppose that he was responsible for Wentworth's obtaining an appointment to his former office of surveyor general of his Majesty's woods in North America. The American Revolution had contracted the area of the King's forests, but there were splendid pines in Nova Scotia (which then included New Brunswick), and their preservation was now doubly important. In the summer of 1783, therefore, the former governor of New Hampshire left his family in England and crossed the ocean to resume in a new region his familiar sylvan duties.

CHAPTER XIV.

NOVA SCOTIA

IN September, 1783, Nova Scotia was neither the most cheerful nor the most comfortable spot in the world. Thousands of forlorn Loyalists, sent hither upon the evacuation of New York were disembarking upon its inhospitable shores, and new towns, such as Shelburne and St. John, appeared almost overnight. The efforts of these unfortunates to be housed ere the long, cruel winter settled upon the land of their exile were strenuous indeed; and how to feed the twenty-five or thirty thousand newcomers was another great problem. But this sudden immigration and consequent confusion had comparatively little effect upon the sleepy capital called Halifax, for few Loyalists were so fortunate as to be sent to that comfortable haven.¹ Upon his arrival from England, Wentworth found Halifax a small, aristocratic community of perhaps twelve hundred people,² many of whom belonged to families that had migrated from New England twenty years or more before the outbreak of the Revolution. It was a prosperous little town with a pronounced military and naval atmosphere, for its foundation in the middle of the century had been due to Britain's need of a good naval station in the northeastern part of America, and it was a garrison town as well. The worst feature of Halifax was its climate, which, although healthful, consisted chiefly of a long winter, a short summer, and frequent fogs.

After the American Revolution one of the chief duties of the surveyor general of his Majesty's woods was the selection and

1. Douglas Brymner's *Report on Canadian Archives*, 1884, p. xli.

2. Beamish Murdoch's *History of Nova Scotia*, iii, 37.

reservation of large tracts of timber in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Cape Breton. The office now commanded a salary of £800, but that meant only "£400 neat," according to Wentworth, besides a guinea a day when the surveyor was in active service. In earlier days nothing had given John Wentworth greater satisfaction than his expeditions into the New Hampshire forests, but at forty-five or fifty he found the life of a timber-cruiser a strain upon his constitution, which had always had rheumatic proclivities. Nevertheless, he spent about six months of the year in the woods¹ and complained but little of the hardships encountered in the performance of his duties.

Although Wentworth came out from England alone, Mrs. Wentworth soon followed him to his new surroundings, and in a beautiful situation, on the west shore of Bedford Basin, about six miles from Halifax, they built an attractive but unpretentious country home.² This miniature Wentworth House in Nova Scotia the Surveyor General called Friar Lawrence's Cell, but, for financial reasons perhaps, he did not lavish upon it and its surrounding acres of woodland the enthusiasm and prodigality which had made famous his seat in New Hampshire. Here and in Halifax the years passed pleasantly and rapidly. Meanwhile Charles-Mary Wentworth, who had been left in England, was growing up. His school-days were spent at Westminster, where he did well in his studies, particularly in Hebrew and Greek.³ In 1791 he was a youth of sixteen years, and to become reacquainted with this young man was doubtless the primary motive of Mr. and Mrs. Wentworth when they decided to revisit England in

1. Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Sixth Series, iv, 497.

2. "Masonian Papers," vol. iii ("Peirce Manuscripts"), folio 99; in the state archives at Concord, New Hampshire.

3. *Westminster School Register*, 1764-1883, p. 245; Mrs. Marcou's *Life of Jeremy Belknap*, p. 197, and "Peirce Manuscripts," folio 103.

that year. They little dreamed how opportune, from a political point of view, the Surveyor General's presence in London at just that time was to prove.

John Parr had been governor of Nova Scotia for about nine years, when, in the autumn of 1791, he died in office. As soon as the news of his demise reached England, the Home Secretary, Henry Dundas, naturally looked about for a successor, and John Wentworth took pains to be in sight.¹ One day during the winter of 1791-1792, therefore, he received the coveted appointment, and in the following April he sailed for Nova Scotia as chief executive of that province. When the frigate *Hussar* made port at Halifax five weeks later, the Governor was welcomed by a salute of fifteen guns and was escorted to Government House by an appropriate delegation of magistrates and army officers. On the following day, May 14, 1792, Wentworth was sworn into office, and the guns on the parade proclaimed his inauguration to the surrounding country.

In speaking of John Wentworth as the governor of Nova Scotia, one is guilty of technical inaccuracy, for, since 1786, the governor at Quebec had been nominally the chief executive of Nova Scotia. Hence Wentworth's exact office was that of lieutenant-governor, although his duties and powers were in no way limited by his titular superior. Governor Wentworth, therefore, had a free hand in the government of his province. He studied its needs, and promoted legislation to meet them with the same intelligence and tact which had characterized his administration in New Hampshire. It is interesting, rather than surprising, perhaps, to discover that his fundamental policies were practically the same in both provinces. These were the construction of good roads, the encouragement of education, and the maintenance of military preparedness.

1. Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Sixth Series, iv, 522.

Like Wentworth's native province, Nova Scotia contained a diversified population, but in his new jurisdiction the differences were much more pronounced than in New Hampshire. In the first place, there were the English, Scotch, and American colonists who had settled on the peninsula since 1750. Secondly, there were the French Canadians or Acadians, unfortunate relics of a previous empire, but more fortunate, perhaps, than those deported from the land of *Evangeline* in 1755. They were not an easy people for an Englishman to understand either as to language or customs, and the fact that England and France were at war in 1793, and for years afterward, laid them under suspicion. Thirdly, there were Indians, poor improvident Micmacs, who could no longer gain a livelihood from hunting, and yet found it difficult to change their habits and pursue agriculture. Fourthly, there were black men, most of them negro Loyalists or soldiers in the late war, who had been granted lands in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Add to this variety of races a colony of Germans and a few Irish, and one has a fairly accurate idea of the citizenry under Wentworth's jurisdiction. The first group — the English, Scotch, and Americans — caused the Governor little concern. They were for the most part of his own stripe, earnest, upright, and self-reliant, and they formed the backbone of Nova Scotia. But the less fortunate races appealed to his sympathy and evoked his special care. There were probably not many more than a hundred Acadian families in the whole peninsula and they might easily have been ignored by the government, but Wentworth went out of his way to make them feel that they were a desirable and important part of the body politic. He required no fees when granting lands to them; he placed them on grand juries and appointed them to local offices; he even helped their priests. Government of this kind was new to the Acadians, and when war between France and England made military preparations neces-

sary, they showed their appreciation by sending Wentworth seventy-five volunteers. "Their old captain told me," wrote the Governor, "they now first found themselves the same as Englishmen and were perfectly happy, and would be as faithful to the King and Province as any man in it. I confess recovering these poor people to their own happiness, and as the old man said to me, that I had made them forget all the miseries their people had formerly suffered, gives me infinitely more comfort than any other thing since my administration."¹

The Indians, too, he treated like human beings, and with almost equally gratifying results. He believed that with a little encouragement they would attempt enough agriculture to be self-supporting. At any rate, he was willing to try the experiment by promising a pair of blankets to each family that raised enough produce for its own sustenance.² In order to give them a fair start, he drew upon the imperial government for a few hundred pounds and provided them with the tools and seeds. Through his efforts, too, about one hundred and fifty Indian warriors were annexed to the provincial military establishment for use in time of emergency. They received no pay, but were fed and clothed at the expense of the government, and in return were expected to be faithful to the British king, and to fight in case of an invasion by the French.³ Thus another element in the population, which might have been alienated, was bound to the government through the humanity and wisdom of John Wentworth. It is not surprising, therefore, that he was referred to by the press as "our beloved and adored governor," nor that he should have evoked the following lines from one of his admirers,

1. Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Sixth Series, iv, 564.

2. *Nova Scotia Archives*, p. 502.

3. Murdoch's *History of Nova Scotia*, iii, 115, 154-155.

who saw him and his lady pass through Granville while touring the western part of the province:

When tyrants travel, though in pompous state,
 Each eye beholds them with indignant hate;
 Destroying angels thus are said to move,
 The objects more of terror than of love;
 For grandeur can't, unless with goodness join'd,
 Afford true pleasure to the virtuous mind.
 But when our loyal Wentworth deigns to ride,
 (The Sovereign's fav'rite and the subject's pride),
 Around the chariot crowding numbers throng,
 And hail his virtues as he moves along;
 Such high respect shall be conferred on him
 The king delights to honor and esteem.
 Whose loyalty unshaken, spotless fame,
 And social virtues shall endear his name
 In every loyal bosom long to live
 As our lov'd monarch's representative."¹

England's wars with the French revolutionists and with Napoleon prevented the achievement of extensive internal improvements in Nova Scotia during the sixteen years of John Wentworth's administration. Nevertheless, within a few months of his inauguration he had brought about the construction of a road connecting the town of Pictou, a Scottish settlement on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, with Halifax. "This has been long wanted," wrote the Governor, "but thought impracticable, from the expense, and the supposed difficulty of the country. Both are, however, overcome, and a good cart-road is cut, made, and bridged, by which the inhabitants of that populous, increasing, and fertile district have an easy communication with the capital, and can enjoy the benefits of its commerce, as well as all the advantages of law and government; of all of which they were before almost as much deprived as if they had been resident on the White Moun-

1. Murdoch's *History of Nova Scotia*, iii, 139.

tains. This has been accomplished without any burthen on the public, from a revenue which has always been disposed of by governors, but hitherto not appropriated to such purposes as I think it my duty to apply it. The distance is sixty-eight miles, of which I have cut, bridged, and made entirely, forty, and made the remainder comfortable (except eight miles which was done before), and my funds diminished not £150 currency.”¹ With true Wentworthian éclat he went to Pictou in the autumn of 1792, and officially opened the road in person. Equally characteristic was the Governor’s scheme to connect Halifax and the Basin of Minas by a canal. The Shubenacadie River on one side of the watershed and a chain of lakes on the other made it a tempting proposition, and although not carried into effect in Wentworth’s time, an artificial waterway was established about 1830.

The Church of England college which Wentworth had hoped to establish at Hanover, New Hampshire, he found at Windsor, Nova Scotia, where, in 1788, the provincial government, in close agreement with the Established Church, had opened an institution of learning. To promote the welfare of this little college became one of the Governor’s fixed policies. As early as 1792 he besought the Crown to grant a charter of incorporation, and repeatedly reminded the imperial government of its need of financial assistance. In both causes he was ultimately successful. The British government supplemented its original grant of £4000 by a subsidy of £1500 in 1795, and in 1802 Parliament began a series of annual appropriations of £1000 which continued for thirty years or more. In 1802 the much desired charter was issued to the institution which received the name of King’s College.²

Wentworth was, of course, appointed one of the governors of the College, as was also the Bishop of Nova Scotia. The Arch-

1. Mrs. Marcou’s *Life of Jeremy Belknap*, pp. 195–196.

2. T. B. Akins’s *Brief Account of King’s College*.

bishop of Canterbury was made patron, with power to veto any statutes, rules, or ordinances adopted by the governing board. Under such a charter one would have expected the development of a strictly denominational college, but, curiously enough, it was the bishop and the archbishop who prevented its falling into bigotry. In 1803 the majority of the governing board adopted a statute which compelled every student at his matriculation to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of Faith of the Church of England. Against this the bishop protested on the ground that it would give just dissatisfaction to the Dissenters who had united with the Episcopalians in founding the College, and whose sons would now be excluded. The governors did not see fit to repeal the statute, however; thereupon the bishop appealed to the archbishop, who, to his everlasting credit, annulled the illiberal restriction and forced the board to open the gates to both Churchman and Dissenter. Where John Wentworth stood on this question is more easily guessed than ascertained. But the fact that he was the highest government official on a board which somehow failed to publish the repeal of the denominational restriction, and so allowed the people of the province to remain uninformed of the change in entrance requirements, suggests that he was not on the side of the broad-minded bishop.

War with France, which broke out in 1793, and doubt concerning the neutrality of the United States in that struggle, made extensive military preparations necessary even in so remote a corner of the world as Nova Scotia. Wentworth threw himself into this work with his usual energy. At the direction of the British government, he raised a corps of six hundred troops called "The King's Nova Scotia Regiment," which acquitted itself well; equal success attended his efforts to organize an efficient and mobile provincial militia. There were in Nova Scotia about nine thousand men capable of bearing arms, but only in case of ex-

treme emergency would Wentworth have expected all of them to mobilize, since they were for the most part farmers, upon whom the province depended for its subsistence. He wished, however, to have about a thousand armed men whom he could call into active service at a moment's notice and send to any part of the peninsula that might be invaded. This desire led to the formation of a legion consisting of seven companies of infantry, two of artillery, and one of cavalry, that prided itself on the rapidity with which it could assemble ready for duty.¹ Apparently the Governor's zeal and enthusiasm were transmitted through every branch of the militia, for when it was noised abroad that a French fleet was about to descend upon Halifax the officers found it difficult to obtain obedience from those who were ordered to stay at home.² Of the thousand or more who marched into town, Wentworth wrote, "Perhaps a finer body of athletic, healthy young men were never assembled in any country, nor men more determined to do their duty."

Much of the Governor's success with the militia may be attributed to his consideration for them as human beings. When, in the month of May, 1795, the commander of the regular troops called upon Wentworth to supply him with six hundred provincials to erect and repair the fortifications of Halifax, the Governor replied that it was planting time and that in the absence of an emergency he did not feel justified in taking the men away from their fields at such a critical season. Upon another occasion he asked the imperial government to give Nova Scotia naval protection in order to insure the militia against being called from their farms at either seed or harvest time.³ Thus the rustic population, like the Acadians and the Indians, recognized in the

1. *Nova Scotia Archives*, p. 507.

2. Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Sixth Series, iv, 564.

3. Murdoch's *History of Nova Scotia*, iii, 136; *Nova Scotia Archives*, p. 499.

Governor an understanding friend, and his popularity became universal.

Although the French fleet failed to attack Nova Scotia, it is not impossible that Wentworth's vigilant preparations for the defense of his province discouraged the enemy from attempting to carry out their supposed plan. It may have been in recognition of these efforts that he was created a baronet in the spring of 1795. We should like to think so, but the truth-telling archives show that the elevation did not come unsought. In June, 1793, the Governor had asked for the title¹ which the King, on the eleventh of April, 1795, conferred upon him.

In the ten years that followed the conclusion of the American Revolution Halifax had grown rapidly. Its population had increased from twelve hundred to almost five thousand, and the social life of the provincial capital had become more interesting in the same ratio. After 1792 Governor and Mrs. Wentworth were, of course, the recognized king and queen in the local court, and they played their parts well. Their dinners and other entertainments exhausted the adjectives and superlatives at the disposal of the Halifax newspaper. In a single year more than twenty-five hundred people dined at Government House,² and an occasion such as the King's birthday or that of the Prince of Wales, was almost invariably celebrated by a levee, a banquet, or a ball. A newspaper account of one of these gatherings gives us both a description of the event itself and an idea of the impression it made upon contemporary Haligonians.

On the evening of Thursday, December 20th, the Lieutenant Governor and Mrs. Wentworth gave a ball and supper to the ladies and gentlemen of the town and the officers of the army and navy, which was altogether the most brilliant and sumptuous entertainment ever given in this country. The company being assembled in the levee

1. *Nova Scotia Archives*, p. 486.

2. *Wentworth Genealogy*, i, 546.

room at eight o'clock, the band, which was very numerous and excellent, played "God save the King" three times over, after which the country dances commenced, two sets dancing at the same time. The whole house was open — every room illuminated and elegantly decorated. There was a room set apart for cotillions, above stairs, for those who chose to dance them, and a band provided on purpose for it. During the dancing there were refreshments of ice, orgeat, capillaire, and a variety of other things. At twelve the supper-room was opened, and too much cannot be said of the splendor and magnificence of it; the ladies sat down at table, and the gentlemen waited upon them. Among other ornaments, which were altogether superb, there were exact representations of Messrs. Hartshorne and Tremaine's new flour-mill, and of the windmill on the Common. The model of the new lighthouse at Shelburne was incomparable, and the tract of the new road from Picou was delineated in the most ingenious and surprising manner, as was the representation of our fisheries, that great source of the wealth of this country. To all these inimitable ornaments corresponding mottoes were attached, so that not only waste and elegance were conspicuous, but encouragement and genius were displayed. The viands and wines were delectable, and mirth, grace, and good humor seemed to have joined hands to celebrate some glorious festival; but *this* was only for the friends of the Governor and Mrs. Wentworth. When the ladies left the supper-room the gentlemen sat down at table, when the Governor gave several loyal toasts, with *three times three*, and an applicable tune was played after each bumper, which had an admirable effect. At two o'clock the dancing recommenced, and at four the company retired. That ease, elegance, and superiority of manners, which must ever gain Mrs. Wentworth the admiration of the whole community, and that hospitality, perfect good breeding, and infinite liberality which so distinguish the character and conduct of our beloved and adored Governor, never shone with more lustre than on this occasion, when every care of his and Mrs. Wentworth's mind seemed to be to give one universal satisfaction. Everything tended to promote one sympathizing joy, and never was there a night passed with more perfect harmony and luxurious festivity.¹

Unexpected lustre was added to Halifax society in May, 1794, when his Royal Highness Prince Edward arrived in Nova Scotia.

1. Quoted in Murdoch's *History of Nova Scotia*, iii, 103-104.

Today if we remember the prince at all, it is as the Duke of Kent, the father of Queen Victoria. To John Wentworth he was merely the King's fourth son, a young man in his twenties, whom the Governor found likable and whose favor he thought it wise to cultivate. "This prince," he wrote, "is possessed of considerable abilities, a mild and benevolent temper, an active discriminating mind, retentive memory, and quick perception, unremittingly diligent in his profession, methodical, exact and punctual in all his arrangements, to the minutest precision, both in command and in example; temperate in eating, drinking, and sleep, almost to abstemiousness; and although possessing a full sense of his high dignity, it is maintained with a condescending attention that wonderfully attracts every person."¹ After spending several months at Government House with Mr. and Mrs. Wentworth, Prince Edward established himself and his beloved Madam de St. Laurent at Friar Lawrence's Cell, his host's country seat, "there being no other in any degree proper," according to the Governor. The royal lessee reconstructed the house, gave it the appropriate name of The Prince's Lodge, developed the beautiful grounds, and upon his final departure from the province in 1800, returned to the owner a far more pretentious residence than that which had been placed at his disposal in 1794.

Soon after his arrival at Halifax Prince Edward was appointed military commander of the district,² and it speaks well both for his Royal Highness and for Governor Wentworth that, although one represented the military and the other the civil government, they worked together in perfect harmony. Early in 1795 they hatched a little plot together. It was rumored at that time that Lord Dorchester, originally Guy Carleton, was about to resign

1. *John Wentworth to the Duke of Portland*, January 22, 1795; "Emmet Manuscripts," no. 1972, in the New York Public Library.

2. *Nova Scotia Archives*, p. 503.

the governorship of Quebec, and it occurred to Prince Edward and to Wentworth that it would be very agreeable if they could be promoted to Quebec with the same division of power to which they were accustomed in Nova Scotia.¹ But their scheme bore no fruit; although Dorchester left Canada in the following year, the two aspirants for his office remained at Halifax. In the summer of 1798, a horse which the Prince was riding, fell and badly crushed its rider's leg. The physicians agreed that his Royal Highness should go to England for treatment as soon as possible, to which the patient readily consented. He was absent for almost a year, during which period the Nova Scotians sent him a token of their high regard. Five hundred guineas were subscribed, and at Kensington Palace, in January, 1799, a diamond star of the Order of the Garter was presented to the Prince by Charles-Mary Wentworth and a Mr. Hartshorne. The late summer of 1799 found Prince Edward once more at Halifax, but now as Duke of Kent and commander-in-chief of all the army in British North America. Again he made his home at The Lodge in which, he told Wentworth, he took more pleasure than in any other place out of England.² This time, however, his visit was of short duration, for within a year his Royal Highness bade farewell to Nova Scotia and returned to England.

Two other distinguished men visited Halifax during John Wentworth's administration. One was the Duke of Orleans, whom the Revolution of 1830 transformed into Louis Philippe, the citizen king of the French. In 1799 the future king was a prisoner of war, but he and his brothers, the Duke of Montpensier and the Count of Beaujolie, were wined and dined by the Governor and by the Duke of Kent. Both Sir John and his Royal Highness felt a bit guilty when they wrote the government

1. "Emmet Manuscripts," no. 1972; in the New York Public Library.

2. Murdoch's *History of Nova Scotia*, iii, 181.

about the entertainment of their prisoner guests, but the visit of the French noblemen remained for many years a memorable event in the annals of Halifax society. The other distinguished visitor was the sentimental Irish poet, Thomas Moore, who, in September, 1804, ended his American travels in the Nova Scotian capital. Wentworth entertained his charming guest by a trip to the college at Windsor, where, according to Moore, they attended the first examination held in that institution.¹ French noblemen and Irish poets may have afforded temporary excitement to the little court at Halifax, but its greatest asset was the continued presence of Sir John and Lady Wentworth. The Governor's geniality and tact were supplemented by the graciousness of his wife. An unprejudiced contemporary declared emphatically that she was "really a wonderfully charming woman,"² and the statement is borne out by her conquest at the court of George III. When she was presented, in the summer of 1798, Queen Charlotte was so captivated by her personality and good breeding, that she forthwith appointed her a lady in waiting, with permission to reside abroad and a salary of £500 per annum.³ Probably few incidents in his life gave John Wentworth deeper joy than this honor which royalty paid to his lady, for as Frances Wentworth, Mrs. Atkinson, or Lady Wentworth she was in his eyes ever incomparable.

1. *Memoirs, Journals and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, i, 175.

2. *Winslow Papers*, p. 445.

3. Murdoch's *History of Nova Scotia*, iii, 172.

CHAPTER XV.

BENEDICTION

IN spite of proscription and confiscation John Wentworth felt no enduring resentment towards his native land. "The general disposition of kindness towards me, which is manifested in that country," he wrote in 1792, "is unfeignedly pleasing to me, after an adherence to my public duty to oppose their revolution which for so many years had divided us."¹ And although he never carried out the intention to revisit New Hampshire and Boston, which he expressed in the same letter, he corresponded with his old acquaintances and continued as far as possible the friendly intercourse of pre-revolutionary days. First among these old friends was Jeremy Belknap, the historian of New Hampshire, whom Sir John had known well as the wide-awake young minister of Dover.

In the good old times Belknap had been one of the most welcome guests at Wolfeborough, and the Governor had followed the writing of his remarkable *History of New Hampshire* with great interest. When he returned the manuscript of the first chapter, which Belknap had submitted for his criticism, John Wentworth wrote as graceful an appreciation as any author ever received: "Your care in this composition," he averred, "disappoints the ambition of critical examination, and gratifies the more pleasing candour of friendship. Both combine in justifying my declaration that I cannot suggest an amendment."² The Governor's aid

1. *John Wentworth to Stephen Skinner*, November 21, 1792; at Halifax.

2. *John Wentworth to Jeremy Belknap*, November 18, 1774.

was not limited to appreciation, however. Owing to the important part played by his family in New Hampshire affairs for almost a century, he was able to throw light upon a number of points, which the historian would otherwise have found difficult of elucidation.¹ At a later time, when Belknap was studying what he called "the ante-Columbian discovery of America," in preparation for his *American Biography*, Wentworth "employed a proper person to search for any vestige or tradition" of the Northmen on the coast of Newfoundland, and, to the apparent disappointment of his truth-seeking friend, reported that there was on the island no trace of the ancient colony and "no appearance of grapevines, or of anything that could be mistaken for them."²

When the first volume of his *New Hampshire* was ready for publication, about 1783, Belknap tried to persuade Mr. Longman to bring it out in England. The publisher doubted whether the history of a single province would find enough English readers to make a London edition worth while, but before making a final decision he asked Wentworth for his opinion. The Governor was obliged to discourage the idea from a business point of view, but it may well have been at his suggestion that the publisher agreed to place a few copies on sale if Belknap printed his work in America.³ If the historian felt any injury because of his old friend's advice to Mr. Longman, he forgot it a few years later when Wentworth presented to the Massachusetts Historical Society a portrait of his grandfather, John Wentworth, who was the lieutenant-governor of New Hampshire about 1725. He also gave the

1. Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Sixth Series, iv, 47-54, 497-498; also Mrs. Marcou's *Life of Jeremy Belknap*, pp. 189-194.

2. See the "advertisement" in the second volume Jeremy Belknap's *American Biography*.

3. Massachusetts Historical Society's *Collections*, Fifth Series, ii, 277-278.

Society a copy of Miller's *Synopsis of Fossils and Minerals* and "a pamphlet published by the late Prov. of N. York relative to their contests with N. H. for Vermont." Nothing could have pleased Belknap more than these attentions to the society which he had brought into being.

On the other hand, Belknap was useful to Wentworth, especially when the latter was created a baronet, for it then became necessary for him to prove his connection with the English family of Wentworth if he were to assume their heraldic devices. Belknap traced his American genealogy for him and thus aided in establishing his claim, which was ultimately recognized by the King. In thanking the historian for his researches, the Governor added, "The interest your friendship kindly takes in my happiness justifies me in mentioning that, in the honors lately conferred, an addition to my arms was granted, signifying ability and fidelity in the public service. These, however, merited more by honest zeal than brilliant execution, are a pleasing mark of approbation upon principles applicable to all forms of government." ¹

Although Wentworth himself never revisited his native country, he did so by proxy in 1800, when his son made an extensive tour of the United States. After graduating at Oxford, where his college was Brasenose, Charles-Mary Wentworth occupied his time for a year or two as private secretary to Earl Fitzwilliam. The Earl was a nephew of the late Marquis of Rockingham, whose estates he had inherited, and thus it came about that the younger Wentworth in his twenties came to feel as much at home at Wentworth House as had Sir John at the same age. In 1798 and 1799 Lady Wentworth, too, was a frequent guest there. When the time came for the Governor's wife to return to Nova

1. Mrs. Marcou's *Life of Jeremy Belknap*, pp. 201-202. The addition placed two keys in the chevron of the Wentworth arms.

Scotia, in the summer of 1799, she was accompanied by her son, who after a few months in Halifax determined to visit the United States.

Dr. Belknap had died in the previous year, but there were many other friends and acquaintances of the Governor still living in and about Boston. The most intimate of these was his one-time private secretary, Thomas Macdonogh, who was now British consul for the district of New England. To Boston, therefore, Charles-Mary sailed on the ninth day of December, 1799, on the sloop of war *Fly*. Two or three months later he was at Philadelphia, where, according to his father, he was "particularly distinguished by the President, and those in the departments of state whose society and countenance are most honorable and useful to a traveler."¹ The President, who was none other than the Governor's old friend and classmate, John Adams, was approaching the stormiest period of his uncomfortable administration, but the sight of Wentworth's son seems to have evoked unusual friendliness from his New England heart. He spoke of the Governor "in the kindest terms, said it was impossible for him [Adams] to leave his country," but exceedingly wished that the elder Wentworth could come to see him in the United States.²

This was not the first time since the Revolution that Adams had expressed his friendship for Sir John, and since the second president is, perhaps, not a favorite with the American people, it is a pleasure to repeat Wentworth's opinion of his distinguished classmate. He wrote to Dr. Belknap in 1797:

I rejoice in and am proud of the affectionate remembrance of my old friend, the highly respected President of the United States, and with perfect sincerity reciprocate his kind expression; for it is certain "I always loved John Adams." Our youth was spent in confidence

1. *John Wentworth to Scroope Bernard*, April 7, 1800; at Halifax.

2. *John Wentworth to John King*, April 6, 1800; at Halifax.

and intimacy, which discovered to me so many virtues and such pre-eminent abilities, that they created an esteem which has not since been estranged, and still affords me many hours of comforting reflection. Perhaps no man can entertain a more exalted opinion of our friend's political wisdom than I do; nor is it impossible that it may exceed the wisdom of those you designate [the crowned heads of Europe]: the most of them I really believe it does. In that description, however, we have seldom the means of a due appreciation. Their wisdom is often imputed to others, and the reverse in its defect, redoubling the balance against their reputation. You could not more safely anticipate my concurrence, than in the sentiment that my classmate is the most perfect choice that could mark the good sense and sound judgment of the United States. Nor are my best wishes wanting for his prosperous and long administration: therein, I verily believe, is included the greatest good that can be wished for the United States of America.¹

Charles-Mary's travels carried him as far south as Georgia, whence he returned to Halifax in November, 1800. The Governor now outdid Benning Wentworth himself by appointing his own son a member of the Council of Nova Scotia.² In fact, family government bade fair to become a more serious ground for complaint against Sir John here, than it had been in New Hampshire, for he had already made his devoted brother-in-law, Benning, secretary of the province, a member of the Council, and master of the rolls and register in chancery. Charles-Mary did not remain long in Nova Scotia, however; in 1805 he returned to England and spent the rest of his life in that congenial island, which was naturally more homelike to him than either New Hampshire or Nova Scotia.

During the winter of 1807-1808 shadows began to fall across the path of John Wentworth. In December his lady was dangerously ill, and Sir John had hardly recovered from this anxiety

1. Mrs. Marcou's *Life of Jeremy Belknap*, p. 202.

2. *Nova Scotia Archives*, p. 570.



when the death of his steadfast cousin and brother-in-law, Benning Wentworth, occurred in February. A few weeks later the Governor was greeted by Sir George Prevost, who informed him that he had been appointed lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia in his place, and confirmed his statement by showing his commission, dated January 15, 1808. The manner in which Wentworth learned of his supersedure was indeed unfortunate, but the British government cannot be blamed for thinking that the international situation demanded the presence of a military man in Nova Scotia. Sir George was a soldier with a reputation, whereas Wentworth was an elderly civilian with American friends and relatives. If the United States were ever to go to war with England, it seemed as if they must in the winter of 1807-1808 as a result of the *Chesapeake-Leopard* affair. Downing Street little guessed that Jefferson would strangle America's commerce rather than fight for her rights. And if war came, the provinces must be adequately defended. Hence the sudden appointment of Sir George Prevost and the consequent recall of Governor Wentworth.

As soon as he could reasonably do so, Sir John withdrew from Government House and established himself and his family at The Lodge,¹ where he and Lady Wentworth resided for the next year and a half. In June the Assembly adopted an address, expressing its appreciation of the benefits which his administration of sixteen years had conferred upon Nova Scotia. "When his Majesty was graciously pleased to appoint you to this government," it declared, "the province was burthened with a heavy debt, its credit was reduced, its revenues unequal to its expenditures, and its progress in agriculture greatly impeded. During your administration, sir, we have seen the provincial debt discharged, large sums of money applied for public purposes, and

1. *Winslow Papers*, p. 632.

the agriculture, commerce, and fisheries of the province greatly improved and extended.”¹ Furthermore, at the suggestion of the home government, the Assembly granted Wentworth a pension of £500 per annum for life, to which Parliament added £600, thus securing an honorable retirement for their faithful servant.

In February, 1810, Sir John and Lady Wentworth bade farewell to their Nova Scotian home and crossed the ocean to England, where they rejoiced to be once more near their only son. Of their adventures on the deep and their subsequent anxieties in London her Ladyship wrote a good account, which is worth quoting, if only because it gives an idea of her vivacity, which at sixty-five was the same as it had been at sixteen.

We had a tremendous voyage, and twice the ship was given up. The storm was terrible for three days and nights and drowned thirty-five chickens we brought from The Lodge, which I had fed from the shell, all our turkeys, killed our cow, milch goat and pigs, some sheep, and washed a man overboard whose cries were dreadful. No one could assist him, as the seas ran mountain high, when it was decreed by the Almighty that a great returning sea should return him on deck almost suffocated. He was secured and attended to, and the next day at his usual duty. The ship leaked the whole way; the men were sick, and we had a short complement. A woman, whose husband was weak, took his turn at the pump, which was always going. The dead lights were knocked off several times, and five times hogsheads of water burst into our cabin. We lay in a salt water bath almost all the way, but thank God, we arrived safe and in a better state of health than our fears.

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We are still at a hotel where our expenses are excessive. Your uncle and cousin have wearied themselves in search of a house which is still unsettled; the rents are terrible: nothing fit for us under four hundred a year, and everything in proportion. I don't know how we are to get on, but at any rate with rigid economy.

You asked after the game-cock. When he was molting and sick, Muffle took advantage of him and beat him most cruelly, picked out

1. Murdoch's *History of Nova Scotia*, iii, 282-283.

his other eye, tore off one spur and left him senseless. I nursed him several days in my room; but he used to crow so violently at the first dawn of light, that it was impossible to endure it; and I committed the poor blind veteran to the kitchen care, where he survived only two days. Muffle then became Sultan; and when we came away we gave him to the commissioner. Mr. and Mrs. Gray live at The Lodge. I felt very sorry to leave it when the moment came, but I am now so very happy in being with your cousin that I forget all regrets of every sort.¹

In spite of her apparent buoyancy of spirits Lady Wentworth was never in good health for any length of time after leaving Nova Scotia. "There is to be a court on the 30th," she wrote one day in April, 1812, "but I shall never be well enough to attend a court again, nor have the inclination at present, — or money to buy clothes, if I had everything else." The sad words proved to be true, for in the following February she passed away at Sunning Hill, a watering-place not far from Windsor. For a short time after her decease Sir John lingered in England and then returned to Nova Scotia to spend the rest of his days. The Lodge was now too large an establishment for his needs, and probably for his income, and he was content to make his home in the town, first with his sister-in-law, Mrs. Brinley, and, after her death, with a Mrs. Fleigher. In her house he died on the eighth day of April, 1820, being then in his eighty-third year. His remains were buried under St. Paul's Church, where there is a tablet, bearing the following inscription:

In memory of Sir John Wentworth, Baronet, who administered the Government of this Province for nearly sixteen years, from May, 1792, to April, 1808. With what success the public records of that period, and his Majesty's gracious approbation will best testify. His unshaken attachment to his Sovereign and the British constitution was conspicuous throughout his long life.

1. *Lady Wentworth to Samuel Henry Wentworth*, March 1, 1810; a manuscript copy is in the possession of Moses J. Wentworth, Esq., of Chicago.

The same year witnessed also the death of two of the Governor's friends, and the destruction of his beloved house at Wolfeborough. One of these friends was Dr. Cutter, who, after a long and honorable career as a physician in Portsmouth, was gathered to his fathers at the age of eighty-five years. The other was the Duke of Kent, who died suddenly in England. The burning of Wentworth House occurred on the morning of September 12, 1820. The fire started on the roof and spread with astonishing rapidity in spite of the exertions of the neighbors to extinguish it. In about three hours nothing of the celebrated mansion remained except a heap of embers.¹

When one considers the benefits which John Wentworth conferred upon New Hampshire, and the hold which he had upon the imagination and affections of his contemporaries, it is surprising that no town or county, mountain or river in the state has been named in his honor. In the early part of the nineteenth century President Dwight of Yale College, who was an open admirer of the last royal governor, endeavored to rechristen Lake Winnepesaukee by calling it Wentworth; but the Indian name was apparently too deeply rooted in the hearts of the country people to be supplanted by the whim of the traveler. Neither was he successful in attaching the Governor's name to the noble summit which we call Lafayette, although the mountain had no established appellation at that time.² Smith's Pond, which bordered the farm at Wolfeborough, has, however, come to be known as Lake Wentworth, its new name being both appropriate and euphonious. Governor's Island, toward the northern end of Winnepesaukee, preserves the memory, if not the cognomen, of its early

1. *New Hampshire Gazette*, September 26, 1820; for an account of the conflagration by one who witnessed it, see *Granite Monthly*, v, 194.

2. Timothy Dwight's *Travels in New England and New York* (New Haven, 1821-22), ii, 296; iv, 164.

owner; and for nearly a century Wentworth Hall at Hanover has done its best to remind the fleeting college generations of one to whose zealous efforts the existence of their *alma mater* is largely due.

Whether or not the people of New Hampshire have appreciated the fact, their commonwealth, both as province and as state, has never had a more loyal friend than John Wentworth, who, within fifteen years of the day when his person was proscribed and his property confiscated, gave it his benediction in these words:

I do most cordially wish the most extensive, great, and permanent blessings to the United States, and of course rejoice at the establishment of their federal Constitution as a probable means of their happiness. If there is anything partial in my heart in this case, it is that New Hampshire, my native country, may arise to be among the most brilliant members of the Confederation; as it was my zealous wish, ambition, and unremitted endeavor to have led her to, among the provinces, while under my administration. For this object nothing appeared to me too much. My whole heart and fortune were devoted to it.



INDEX

INDEX

- Aberdeen University, 24.
 Acadians, Wentworth's kindness towards, 175-176.
 Adams, John, at Harvard College, 9; his opinion of Portsmouth, 61; his aversion for Paul Wentworth, 166; meets Wentworth in Paris and at Passy, 166-167; his attention to Charles-Mary Wentworth, 189; Wentworth's appreciation of, 189-190.
 Adams, the Rev. Joseph, 61.
 Albany, N. Y., 106.
 Atkinson, Theodore, 79, note.
 Atkinson, Theodore, Jr., death of, 69; funeral of, 70.
 Atkinson, Mrs. Theodore, Jr. *See* Frances Wentworth.
 Austin, Nicholas, 138-139.
 Barkley, Capt., of the *Scarborough*, seizes provision ships, 150; impresses American fishermen, 151-152; his agreement with the people of Portsmouth, 158; his difficulties with the townspeople, 159-160; obliges Wentworth to leave New Hampshire, 160-161.
 Bayard, William, Wentworth visits, 27-28.
 Beaujolie, the Count of, 184.
Beaver, the sloop of war, 52.
 Belknap, Jeremy, defends Wentworth's administration, 80; his friendship with Wentworth, 186; aided by Wentworth in his historical writings, 186-187; traces Wentworth's genealogy, 188; death of, 189.
 Bellew, Capt. Henry, 71.
 Bishop of London, head of the Episcopal Church in America, 104; proposed as trustee of Dartmouth College, 109-110.
 Boston, contributions for the relief of, 137-138; conditions in during the siege, 162; evacuated by the British, 163.
 Boston Massacre, effect of in New Hampshire, 131.
 Boston Port Act, 136-137.
 Brackett, Dr. Joshua, 168, note.
 Bretton Hall, Yorkshire, 82.
 Bretton Woods, N. H., named in honor of Sir Thomas Wentworth, 82, note.
 Brinley, Mrs., 193.
 Brookfield, N. H. *See* Middleton, N. H.
 Browne, the Rev. Arthur, minister of Queen's Chapel, 62, 101.
 Browne, William, 9.
 Brunswick, Maine, trespassers upon the King's woods near, 52; Wentworth goes to, 52-54.
 Byrd, William, Wentworth visits, 26-27.
 Byrd, Mrs. William, 27.
 Cabot, Andrew, 170.
 Cabot, John, 170.
 Canal, the Shubenacadie, advocated by Wentworth, 178.
Canceaux, the, 144.
 Caner, the Rev. Dr., 163.
 Carleton, Sir Guy, governor of Quebec, Livius's dispute with, 85; resignation of, 183-184.
 Carpenters, the incident of the, 137-139.
 Castle, the. *See* Fort William and Mary.
 Charlotte, Queen, 185.
 Chatsworth, 27.
 Cheshire, County of, 37.
 Church of England, at Portsmouth, 61-62; the original church in New Hampshire, 101-103; its growth

- at Portsmouth, 103-104; condition of in New Hampshire, 110-112; Wentworth's plan for promoting, 110-113; in the Connecticut Valley, 116; and King's College, 178-179.
- Claremont, N. H., 116.
- Coal, imported from Cape Breton, 65.
- Cochran, Capt. John, delivers Wentworth's orders to the *Grosvenor*, 133; warned of attack on Castle, 141; his behavior during the first attack, 142; with Wentworth in the Castle, 157.
- Cohoss, the lower, the fertility of, 87; why chosen as site for Dartmouth College, 107.
- Concord, Mass., the fight at, effect of in New Hampshire, 149.
- Congress, the Continental, New Hampshire sends delegates to, 135-136; measures advocated by, 136; recommends confiscation of Loyalist property, 168.
- Copley, John Singleton, his portraits of Wentworth, 67-68, 69, note; his portrait of Mrs. Atkinson, 69-70.
- Cossitt, Ranna, 116.
- Cotton Mountain, 88, note 1.
- Counties, New Hampshire divided into, 35-37; origin of names of, 37-38.
- Cusk, in Winnepesaukee, 95.
- Cutter, Ammi Ruhammah, at Harvard College, 9-11; a proprietor of Wolfeborough, 13, 88; attends first Commencement at Dartmouth College, 114; death of, 194.
- Cutter's Hill, now Cotton Mountain, 88, note 1.
- Cutts, Samuel, 141.
- Dalton, Tristram, 10.
- Dartmouth, the Earl of, Colonial Secretary, 80; promotes Peter Livius, 84-85; aids Wheelock's Indian school, 105; trustee of the Indian school, 106; Dartmouth College named in honor of, 110; asks governors to prevent importation of munitions, 140.
- Dartmouth College, sun-dial at, 44, note; charter of, 107-110; origin of name of, 110; monopoly granted to, 113; first Commencement at, 114; Bostonian hostility toward, 116; Wentworth's designs upon, 116; confers degree upon Wentworth, 117; names hall in honor of Wentworth, 195.
- Deane family, prosecuted for trespassing on the King's woods, 56-60.
- Deering, N. H., 71.
- Deserters from the British army, teach trades to Americans, 126; discouraged by B. Thompson, 148.
- Dorchester, Lord. *See* Sir Guy Carleton.
- Dorchester, N. H., Wentworth a proprietor in, 87.
- Drew, John, 98.
- Duane, James, lawyer of New York, 57-58.
- Dunbar, David, 50.
- Dundas, Henry, 174.
- Dwight, Timothy, 194.
- Emerson, Mr., at Hollis, 71.
- Episcopalianism. *See* Church of England.
- Exeter, N. H., founded by Wheelwright, 3; becomes center of disaffection, 131; first revolutionary convention at, 135; second revolutionary convention at, 147; Provincial Congress meets at, 149; Wentworth's personal property sold at, 168.
- Exeter Combination, the, 3.
- Falcon*, the, 157.
- Fenton, Col. John, prevents destruction of tea, 134; representative from Plymouth, N. H., 153; sketch of his career, 153-154; his letter to

- the people of Grafton County, 155; unseated by the Assembly, 152, 155; captured and sent to Exeter, 156.
- Fenton, Mrs. John. *See* Elizabeth Temple.
- Fisher, John, 63.
- Fitch, Samuel, 73.
- Fitzwilliam, Earl, 188.
- Flax, grown in New Hampshire, 33.
- Fleisher, Mrs., 193.
- Fly*, the sloop of war, 189.
- Flynt, Mr., tutor at Harvard College, assaulted, 11.
- Folsom, Col. Nathaniel, delegate to the Continental Congress, 135; his share in the attack on the Castle, 144; loses commission in the militia, 147.
- Fort William and Mary, description of, 44-45; the first attack upon, 141-142; second attack upon, 144; Wentworth takes refuge in, 156-157; wrecked by Americans, 161.
- Francetown, N. H., 71.
- Franklin, Benjamin, 167.
- French Canadians. *See* Acadians.
- Friar Lawrence's Cell, built by Wentworth, 173; occupied and developed by Prince Edward, 183. *See* also Prince's Lodge.
- Gage, General Thomas, asks for New Hampshire carpenters, 137-138; declines to send troops to Portsmouth, 146; increases Wentworth's difficulties, 149-150.
- Gamble, Capt., 146.
- George III, his opinion of Paul Wentworth, 165.
- Gibson, Richard, 102-103.
- Gilman, Col. Peter, appointed to the Council, 131.
- Gilman, Capt. Samuel, 169.
- Gosport, N. H., 162.
- Governor's Island, 194.
- Grafton, County of, 38.
- Grafton, the Duke of, 38.
- Graves, Admiral Thomas, sends ships to Portsmouth, 144; orders seizure of provision ships, 150-151; sends the *Falcon* to Portsmouth, 157; does not aid Wentworth to return to New Hampshire, 162.
- Gray, Mr. and Mrs., 193.
- Grosvenor*, the mast-ship, 133.
- Halifax, N. S., tea shipped from Portsmouth to, 134; description of in 1783, 172; fortifications repaired at, 180-181; social life at, 172, 181-183.
- Hanover, N. H., road from Wolfeborough to, 42; chosen as site for Dartmouth College, 107; B. Wentworth's land in, 100; first Commencement at, 114.
- Hart, Benjamin, overseer at Wentworth House, 89; supervises construction of road, 98.
- Hartley, David, 167.
- Hartshorne, Mr., 184.
- Harvard College, John Wentworth enters, 8; life at, in the eighteenth century, 8-12; the Class of 1755, 9-10.
- Haven, Dr., 80.
- Haverhill, N. H., 107.
- Heard house, the Indian attack upon the, 4.
- Hemenway, Moses, 10.
- Hillsborough, County of, 37.
- Hillsborough, the Earl of, Colonial Secretary, 37.
- Hilton, Martha, marries Benning Wentworth, 5-6; marries Col. Michael Wentworth, 65, 73; sole heir to B. Wentworth's estate, 73; naturally hostile to Wentworth, 75.
- Holderness, N. H., 96.
- Holland, Capt. Samuel, makes map of New Hampshire, 43-44; gives sun-dial to Dartmouth College, 44, note.

- Hood, Commodore Samuel, coöperates with Wentworth, 52.
Hope, the, 161.
 Howe, General William, succeeds Gage, 163; takes New York, 164.
Hussar, the frigate, 174.
 Hutchinson, Thomas, his house wrecked by a mob, 18.
- Indians, Wentworth's kindness towards, 176.
 Isles of Shoals, 161-162.
- Jaffrey, George, 79, note.
 Jerry's Point, 151.
Julius Caesar, the, 163.
- Kent, the Duke of. *See* Prince Edward.
- King's College, charter issued to, 178; religious question at, 179; T. Moore visits, 185.
- King's woods, surveyor general of the, Wentworth appointed, 24; duties of, 48; salary of, 49, 99, 173; unpopularity of the office, 49-50; Wentworth's administration as, 51-60; duties of, after the Revolution, 172-173.
- Kingswood, 13.
- Laconia Company, the, 101-102.
- Lafayette, Mt., 194.
- Landaff, N. H., proposed as site for Dartmouth College, 107; granted to the College, 110.
- Land-tenure, in New Hampshire, 40.
- Langdon, John, his attitude towards Wentworth, 75-76; elected to the Continental Congress, 147; makes money during the war, 164.
- Langdon, Dr. Samuel, 80.
- Langdon, Woodbury, his attitude towards Wentworth, 75-76; suspected by Wentworth, 78; invited to Wentworth House, 94; a friend of Livius, 139; leader of the opposition, 139; and Wentworth House, 169-170.
- Langdon, Mrs. Woodbury, letter from Mrs. Wentworth to, 92-94.
- Lee, Arthur, his estimate of Paul Wentworth, 165-166.
- Lexington, Mass., fight at, effect of in New Hampshire, 149.
- Liberty*, the sloop, 121.
- Linen, manufactured in New Hampshire, 33.
- Livermore, Samuel, attorney general of New Hampshire, his part in the Livius affair, 78; his seat at Holderness, 96.
- Livius, Peter, early career of, 74; opposes Wentworth in the Council, 74-75; creates a party hostile to Wentworth, 75-76; carries his grievances to England, 76-77; is sustained by the Board of Trade, 81; his charges refuted by the Privy Council, 84; promoted to chief-justiceship of New Hampshire, 84-85; transferred to Quebec, 85; his subsequent history, 85; Wentworth gives dog to, 94; his seat at Tuftonborough, 96; his adherents annoy Wentworth, 139.
- Livius, Mrs. Peter. *See* Anna Elizabeth Mason.
- Locke, Samuel, 10.
- Londonderry, N. H., linen manufactured in, 33; congratulates Wentworth, 85.
- Longfellow, H. W., his *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, 5-6.
- Longman, Mr., 187.
- Loring, Mrs. Joshua, Jr., at Wolfborough, 92-93.
- Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, visits Halifax, 184-185.
- Loyalists, flee from Boston, 163-164; their property confiscated in New Hampshire, 168-169; settle in Nova Scotia, 172.
- Lyme, N. H., Wentworth a proprietor in, 87; its right of representation disputed, 152.

- Macdonogh, Thomas, his services in the Livius affair, 80-83, stands by Wentworth, 142; accompanies Wentworth to the Isles of Shoals, 161-162; on Long Island, 164; British consul at Boston, 189.
- Manufacturing, stimulated by non-importation, 126; Exeter votes encouragement of, 131.
- Map, the Holland, of New Hampshire, 43-44.
- March, Paul, 88.
- Mason, Anna Elizabeth, wife of Peter Livius, 74; at Wentworth House, 92.
- Mason, Capt. John, founds New Hampshire, 101-102.
- Mason, John Tufton, 7; father-in-law of Peter Livius, 74.
- "Masonian Proprietors," the, 7.
- Massachusetts Historical Society, Wentworth's gifts to, 187-188.
- Masts, conservation of timber fit for, 47-48.
- Mayhew, Mr., tutor at Harvard College, 8.
- Micmacs. *See* Indians.
- Middleton, N. H., Wentworth builds good road through, 97-98.
- Militia, in New Hampshire, 45-46; in Nova Scotia, 179-181.
- Montpensier, the Duke of, 184.
- Moore, Thomas, 185.
- Moose Mountain, 94.
- Morris, Judge, 58.
- Morton, Sarah, 91, note 2.
- Murray, William, Solicitor General, 78.
- Negroes, in Portsmouth, 34; in Nova Scotia, 175.
- Newcastle, the Duke of, 49.
- New Hampshire, not represented at Stamp Act Congress, 17; population of, 31; description of, in 1767, 31-33; manufacturing in, 34; divided into counties, 35-37; its need of good roads, 38-39; land-tenure in, 40; the Holland Map of, 43-44; militia of, 45-46; advantages of living in, 96, 99; founded by Mason and Gorges, 101-102; religious cleavage in, 103-104; religious situation in, 111; its loyalty to the empire, 119; aloof from the other colonies, 124-125; the temper of, 128; sends delegates to Continental Congress, 135; raises three regiments, 149; reported tired of the war, 164; adopts a constitution, 167; proscribes certain Loyalists, 168; confiscates Loyalist estates, 168-169; never revisited by Wentworth, 186; receives Wentworth's blessing, 195.
- New Hampshire Grants, the, 21-23.
- North, Lord, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 129; his opinion of Paul Wentworth, 165.
- North Carolina, timber of, 26.
- Nova Scotia, Loyalists settle in, 172; the government of, 174; character of, 175; internal improvements in, 177-178; militia of, 179-181; benefits resulting from Wentworth's administration, 191-192.
- Occom, Samson, in England, 105-106.
- Orford, N. H., a possible site for Dartmouth College, 107; its right of representation disputed, 152.
- Orleans, the Duke of. *See* Louis Philippe.
- Oxford University, confers degree upon Wentworth, 24.
- Parr, John, 174.
- Peirce, Daniel, 79, note.
- Pheasants, at Wolfborough, 95.
- Pictou, N. S., 177-178.
- Pine trees, conservation of in the colonies, 47-48; size of, 56; location of the best, 56.
- Pleasant Valley, land granted in, 88, note 2.

- Plymouth, N. H., its right of representation disputed, 152-153; Col. Fenton's seat at, 154.
- Point Breeze, granted to Thomas Wentworth, 88, note 2.
- Portraits, of Wentworth, 67-68, 69, note; of Mrs. Atkinson, 69-70.
- Portsmouth, N. H., its friendship for Harvard College, 8; population of, 34; character of, 35; handicapped commercially, 38-39; John Adams's opinion of, 61; society of, 61-62; celebrates the acquittal of Wentworth, 85; declines to adopt non-importation policy, 125, 131; first violence at, 132; declares against East India tea, 133; escapes a tea party, 133-134; votes money for Boston poor, 137; protests against seizure of provision ships, 150; discountenances sniping, 151; its relations with Capt. Barkley, 158-160.
- Prevost, Sir George, 191.
- Prince Edward, H. R. H., arrives in Nova Scotia, 182; character of, 183; military commander of Nova Scotia, 183; hopes to succeed Dorchester, 183-184; star presented to, 184; returns to England, 184; entertains Louis Philippe, 184; death of, 194.
- Prince's Lodge, occupied by Prince Edward, 183, 184.
- Princeton College, confers degree upon Wentworth, 24.
- Quitrents, in New Hampshire, 40; proceeds of devoted to road-building, 41.
- Randolph, Col. Peter, Wentworth visits, 27.
- Representation, right of, in New Hampshire, 152-153.
- Resolution*, the brigantine, 132.
- Resource*, the schooner, 163.
- Revere, Paul, carries news to Portsmouth, 139.
- Rhode Island, safeguards its military supplies, 140.
- Rindge, N. H., 71.
- Rindge, Daniel, 79, note.
- Rindge, Elizabeth, mother of the Governor, 8.
- Rindge, Jotham, 96.
- Rindge, Mrs. Jotham, 94.
- Ripley, Silvanus, graduates from Dartmouth College, 114; offered assistantship at King's Chapel, 115-116.
- Roads, New Hampshire's need of, 38-39; construction of, urged by Wentworth, 38-41; method of constructing, 41-42; four highways promoted by Wentworth, 42-43; improved through Middleton, 96-98; built in Nova Scotia, 177-178.
- Rochester, N. H., committee of correspondence, 139.
- Rockingham, County of, 38.
- Rockingham, the Marquis of, a friend of Wentworth, 15; his country-seat, 16; favors repeal of the Stamp Act, 19; allows Benning Wentworth to resign, 23; county named in honor of, 38; Wentworth presents portrait to, 68; Charles-Mary named in honor of, 72; his position in the Livius affair, 81; his attentions to the Wentworths in exile, 165, 167; again Prime Minister, 171; death of, 171.
- Rogers, Daniel, 79, note.
- Rumford, Count. *See* Benjamin Thompson.
- Ryder, Sir Dudley, Attorney General, 78.
- Scarborough*, the, sent to Portsmouth, 144; seizes provision ships, 150; one of her boats attacked, 151; sails for Boston, 161.

- Sewall, David, at Harvard College, 9-10; a proprietor of Wolfborough, 13.
- Sharpe, Governor, 27.
- Smith's Pond, Wentworth buys land near, 89; now called Lake Wentworth, 194.
- Society for Propagating the Gospel, its activities, 112-113; survey of the Connecticut Valley made for, 116.
- Soldiers, British, sent to Boston, 126.
- Stamp Act, its effect in the colonies, 17-18; Wentworth's attitude towards, 19-20; its repeal, 20; colonists' attitude towards, 57, note.
- Stavers' tavern, 93.
- Strafford, County of, 37.
- Strafford, the Earl of, portrait of, 16; county named in honor of, 37-38.
- Sullivan, Major John, delegate to the Continental Congress, 135; leads second attack on the Castle, 143-144; loses commission in the militia, 147; reelected to the Congress, 147.
- Sunning Hill, 193.
- Tea, importation of taxed, 120, 129; Exeter votes non-consumption of, 131; Portsmouth declares against East India tea, 133; landed at Portsmouth, 133-134.
- Temple, Elizabeth, 153.
- Temple, John, lieutenant-governor of New Hampshire, 153.
- Temple, Robert, of Ten Hills Farm, 153.
- Thomlinson, John, New Hampshire agent at London, 18.
- Thompson, Benjamin, friend of Wentworth, 95; flees from Concord, 148; discourages deserters, 148.
- Townshend Acts, the, 120; repealed, except the tax on tea, 129.
- Trecothick, Barlow, New Hampshire agent at London, 18; favors repeal of the Stamp Act, 19; activity in the Livius affair, 80-81.
- Warner, Daniel, 79, note.
- Warner, Jonathan, 79, note.
- Webb, William, 89.
- Weehawken, 27.
- Wells, Judge, of Brattleborough, 58-59.
- Wentworth, Benning, uncle of the Governor, appointed governor of New Hampshire, 5; his marriage with Martha Hilton, 5-6; a graduate of Harvard College, 8; his career as governor, 20-23; his resignation, 24; his administration of the King's woods, 49-50; death of, 73; his will, 73; lands granted to himself canceled by Wentworth, 73-74; prevents founding of a college, 104; encourages Wheelock, 105; gives land to Dartmouth College, 110; his zeal for the Church of England, 104, 112; his contest with the Assembly regarding right of representation, 153.
- Wentworth, Mrs. Benning. *See* Martha Hilton.
- Wentworth, Benning, brother-in-law of the Governor, stands by him, 142; in the Castle, 157; on Long Island, 164; appointed member of the Council, etc., 190; death of, 191.
- Wentworth, Charles-Mary, birth and baptism of, 72; goes to England, 163; attention paid to by the Marquis of Rockingham, 165; at Westminster School, 173; presents star to Prince Edward, 184; secretary to Earl Fitzwilliam, 188; tours the United States, 188-190; meets President Adams, 189; appointed member of the Council, etc., 190; returns to England, 190.

- Wentworth, Frances, wife of the Governor, her beauty, 69; Copley's portrait of, 69-70; wife of T. Atkinson, Jr., 69-70; marries Wentworth, 70; Francestown named in honor of, 71; son born to, 72; her dignity during the Livius affair, 83; her life at Wolfborough, 92-94; goes to England, 163; in England during the war, 165; goes to Nova Scotia, 173; revisits England in 1791, 173; entertains at Government House, 181-182; appointed lady in waiting by Queen Charlotte, 185; her voyage to England in 1810, 192; her illness and death, 193.
- Wentworth, Hunking, uncle of the Governor, 139.
- Wentworth, John, grandfather of the Governor, appointed lieutenant-governor of New Hampshire, 4; character and administration of, 5; portrait of presented to the Massachusetts Historical Society, 187.
- Wentworth John, governor of New Hampshire, birth of, 7; his parentage, 7-8; at Harvard College, 8-12; a proprietor of Wolfborough, 13-14; goes to England, 14; his intimacy with the Marquis of Rockingham, 15-17; appointed agent of New Hampshire at London, 18; opinion of the Stamp Act, 19-20; intercedes for Benning Wentworth, 23; appointed governor of New Hampshire and surveyor general of the King's woods, 24; his honorary degrees, 24; returns to America, 25; on the timber of the South, 26; his journey from Charleston to Portsmouth, 26-29; inauguration of, 29; names five counties, 37-38; promotes road-construction, 38-43; collects quitrents, 40-41; urges survey of province, 43; encourages military preparedness, 44-46; goes to Brunswick, Me., 52-54; his other expeditions into the King's woods, 54-56; prosecutes the Deanes, 56-60; attempts to oust Judge Wells, 58-59; his tact as surveyor general, 60; his use of display, 62; his residence in Portsmouth, 63-64; his housekeeping problems, 65-66; his horses and carriages, 67; portraits of, 67-68, 69, note; marries Mrs. Atkinson, 70; his nephews and nieces, 71-72; becomes a father, 72; disappointed by B. Wentworth's will, 73; cancels grants of land made by B. Wentworth, 73-74; Livius's indictment of, 76-77; his defense, 78-79; sends Macdonogh to England, 80; the Board of Trade condemns, 81; the Privy Council sustains, 84; ball in honor of, 85; congratulated by the town of Londonderry, N.H., 85; his desire to reside in the country, 87, 89; builds Wentworth House, 89-91; his life at Wolfborough, 92-95; his love of natural history, 95; gives land to settlers, 96; causes good road to be built through Middleton, 96-98; his income and manner of living, 99-100; encourages Wheelock and his Indian school, 105; offers township for Wheelock's school, 106-107; grants charter to Dartmouth College, 107-110; grants township to the College, 110; his zeal for the Church of England, 110-113, 116; attends Commencement at Dartmouth College, 114; his offer to Ripley, 114-116; his designs upon the College, 116; receives degree from Dartmouth, 117; laments methods of enforcing imperial legislation, 120-122; his administrative policy, 122-124; decries sending of soldiers to Boston, 126; prophesies independence, 128; adds Col. P.

Gilman to the Council, 131; prevents destruction of tea at Portsmouth, 133-134; opposes union of colonies, 134-135; dissolves irregular meeting of the Assembly, 135; hires carpenters for Gage, 137-138; condemned by Portsmouth committee, 138; blames Woodbury Langdon for opposition, 139; expects attack on the Castle, 141; his efforts to prevent the attack, 141-143; asks for naval assistance, 143; attempts to bring the rioters to justice, 145; asks for troops, 146; organizes bodyguards, 146-147; despairs of peace, 147; presents conciliatory proposals of Parliament, 149; asks Barkley to release provision ships, 150; his house attacked by a mob, 156; takes refuge in the Castle, 156; his life in the Castle, 157-158; asks for another ship, 157; mediates between Capt. Barkley and the people of Portsmouth, 159-160; leaves New Hampshire, 161; goes to the Isles of Shoals, 161-162; his last official act, 162; at Boston, 162-163; goes to Halifax and thence to Long Island, 163-164; goes to England, 164-165; meets Adams in Paris, 166-167; his pension, 167; proscribed by New Hampshire, 168; his property confiscated, 168-170; his fear for Wentworth House, 169-170; re-appointed surveyor general of the King's woods, 171; sails for Nova Scotia, 171; surveys timber in Nova Scotia, 173; builds Friar Lawrence's Cell, 173; appointed lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia, 174; his kindness towards Acadians and Indians, 175-176; promotes internal improvements, 177-178; promotes King's College, 178; improves militia, 179-181; created baronet, 181; his entertainments,

181-182; hopes to succeed Dorchester, 183-184; entertains Louis Philippe, 184; entertains Thomas Moore, 185; aids Belknap in his historical writing, 186-187; his gifts to the Massachusetts Historical Society, 187-188; granted an addition to his family arms, 188; expresses appreciation of John Adams, 189-190; appoints Charles-Mary member of the Council, etc., 190; superseded by Prevost, 191; retires to the Lodge, 191; the Assembly's appreciation of, 191-192; pension granted to, 192; goes to England, 192; returns to Nova Scotia, 193; death of, 193; tablet in memory of, 193; his good wishes for New Hampshire and the United States.

Wentworth, Mrs. John, wife of the Governor. *See* Frances Wentworth.

Wentworth, John, nephew of the Governor, 71-72.

Wentworth, Mark Hunking, father of the Governor, 7; member of the Council, 79, note; finances Wentworth House, 99-100; family portraits turned over to, 168; defers to other creditors of Wentworth's estate, 170.

Wentworth, Col. Michael, 64-65; marries B. Wentworth's widow, 73.

Wentworth, Paul, pays for publication of the Holland Map, 43, 166; given portrait of Wentworth, 68, note; helps Wentworth in the Livius affair, 81-83; history of, 82; befriends the Wentworths in England, 165; his services to the government, 165-166; various estimates of, 165-166.

Wentworth, Samuel, uncle of the Governor, 69.

Wentworth, Sir Thomas, Bart., 81-82; helps Wentworth in the Livius affair, 82-83; Bretton Woods, N. H., named in honor of, 82, note.

- Wentworth, Thomas, brother of the Governor, 71; his children, 71-72; his land in Wolfeborough, 88.
- Wentworth, William, settles at Exeter, 3; moves to Dover, 4; saves the Heard house, 4.
- Wentworth Hall, 195.
- Wentworth House, New Hampshire, Wentworth builds, 89-90; description of, 90-91; life at, 92-95; develops Wolfeborough, 96-98; financed by M. H. Wentworth, 99-100; divine services held at, 111, note; ransacked by marauders, 158; confiscated, 168; bought by Andrew Cabot, 170; destroyed by fire, 194.
- Wentworth House, Yorkshire, description of, 16; frequented by Lady Wentworth and by Charles-Mary, 188.
- Wentworth, Lake. *See* Smith's Pond.
- Wentworth-Gardner house, the, 71.
- Westover, 27.
- Wheelock, Eleazar, his Indian school 105, solicits funds in England, 105-106; seeks new location for school, 106-107; drafts charter of Dartmouth College, 107-110; suggests naming College for Wentworth, 110; silver bowl presented to, 114; his diplomacy, 117.
- Wheelwright, the Rev. John, founds Exeter, 3; moves to Maine, 4.
- Whitaker, Nathaniel, in England, 106.
- Whitefield, George, 106.
- White Hills, Wentworth explores the, 95; B. Thompson plans expedition to, 95.
- Wilson, portrait painter, his portrait of Wentworth, 68.
- Windsor, N. S., college at, 178; T. Moore visits, 185.
- Windsor, Vermont, trespassers upon the King's woods at, 56.
- Winnepesaukee, Lake, 194.
- Wolfe, General James, 13.
- Wolfeborough, N. H., granted, 13; spelling of name of, 13, note; development of, 88; Wentworth's allotment in, 88-89; Wentworth House built at, 89; life at, 92-95; effect of Wentworth House upon, 96, 100; population of, 96.

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